



Squelch Tales



Newsletter from the Merrymeeting Amateur Radio Association for February 2015



K1GDI is infecting his entire family

Reported by W1ZE

Winthrop, ME: Not only has George Szadis turned his XYL Linda into Ham radio operator but now he planted the radio geek virus into his Grandson.



The poor lad is destined to have a shallow life spending hours leafing through at electronics parts catalogs, radio magazines, twisting knobs on radio equipment and speaking a language with lots of strange words and acronyms starting with or having the letter Q in them.

At worst, he may even come down with an even more destructive viruses

known as DX-itus and/or Contest-itus which can keep him locked up for hours and days in room he will call his “Ham Shack”, a room that started out as an unused coat closet but will expanded into an entire basement. He will never be found without a handheld transceiver along with a myriad of other electronic communications devices on his belt or in his pocket.

Unfortunately to date, there is no cure but there is a foundation started to help find a cure for George’s Grandson. If you would like to help, Just send what you can to George Szadis, K1GDI, Winthrop Maine



The Algonquin ARC of Marlborough MA is holding its annual Ham Radio Fleamarket on Saturday, February 14, Valentines Day

We invite all hams as buyers, vendors or ragchewers. VEC licensing exams will also be available, starting at 9:00 AM.

If any of you club's members might be interested in attending, could you forward this notice?

The market will held at the 1LT Charles W. Whitcomb Middle School (25 Union St, Marlborough MA), located within about two miles of the intersection of I-290 and I-495.

Doors open at 6:30 AM for vendor

setup and 9:00 AM for buyers. We have alternate/overflow parking at the nearby Marlborough High School with a bus running between parking lots and the flea entrance.

General admission is \$5. Vendor tables may be purchased in advance for \$15 (before Feb 6 or \$20 at the door) and include admission for one.

Details and a flyer with a vendor reservation form are available through our web page:

www.n1em.org (aka. www.qsl.net/n1em/)

Further queries can be sent to:

fleamarket@n1em.org

Tim Ikeda - KA10S, Flea market manager for the Algonquin ARC



Baofeng UV-5R

A review by Bruce Randall, W1ZE

Lately I have been sending out information about the cheap but effective Chinese made Baofeng UV-5R to my fellow hams that own one of these little rice boxes, So I decided to let all the Squelch Tales readers know my opinion on this hand held transceiver.

A few years ago, several relatively inexpensive handheld transceivers, manufactured in China started appearing for sale on the internet and from the secondary ham radio market. These little transceivers came with funny names that were difficult to pronounce like Wouxun and Baofeng. For the most part they seemed to work OK. Some of the early models were difficult to program, complicated by the Chinese attempt to publish owners manuals in their form of English.

Now I'm not short on HTs. I own a Kenwood TH-G71A, a tiny Yaesu VX-3R, both dual band HTs but I wanted an HT that covered the 222 MHz band. Wouxun offered a two meter and 222 MHz dual-band HT the KD-UV2D that sold for around \$100 so I purchased one. After figuring out the programming process the little HT worked pretty well.

Shortly after my purchase of the Wouxun another Chinese dual-band HT started showing up on Ebay and Amazon called the Baofeng UV-5R, a 2-meter/440 MHz HT and they were selling for between 40 and 60 dollars with free shipping. Initial reviews were somewhat positive so I said for 50 bucks I would try one to see for myself how it worked and performed. Within a few days after ordering one on Ebay a small box with a UV-5R in it arrived by a brown delivery truck.

The UV-5R is a compact hand held true dual-band transceiver that provides 4 watts output in the range of 136-174 MHz and 400-480 MHz plus it covered, receive only, in the 65 - 108 MHz FM

broadcast band. The transceiver feature a dual watch and dual reception with a total of to 128 memories channels.

Other features include:

- selectable wide/narrow deviation,
- battery save function,
- VOX, DCS/CTCSS encode,
- key lock and built in flashlight.
- Selectable frequency steps include: 2.5, 5, 6.25, 10, 12.5 and 25 kHz.
- RF power may be selected at 1 or 4 watts.

This radio comes with an ANT5 SMA-J flexible antenna, BL-5 Li-ion battery (7.4V 1800 mAh), belt clip, wrist strap, AC adapter (8.4V 600ma) and drop-in charging tray. Some order sites include an earphone-mic assembly and/or programming cable, good to have.

After some head scratching I figured out how to program in a few local repeater and simplex frequencies into the HT and tried it out to see how it received and transmitted. I am happy to report it worked pretty well. Then I did a head to head test with my Kenwood TH-G71A HT that has served me well for years. Audio reports were almost identical with no clear advantage between the two. I then attached my outside tower mounted dual band vertical to each transceiver and checked reception from weak and moderate strength incoming signals and results were identical. I tuned both HTs to a strong repeater signal then tuned off frequency in 5KHz steps to check bandwidth. At 5 kHz audio distortion was evident in both radios. At 10 kHz the strong repeater signal was just barely detectable on the Kenwood but in the UV-5R the off frequency signal was just a bit

stronger but not by much. The Kenwood cost \$200 and the UV-5R cost \$50 and in general the UV-5R's performance was equal to the Kenwood. I do admit that the Kenwood is much easier to program and store frequencies into memory but for the cost difference I can live with it. To speed things up the UV-5R can be programmed with a computer program called CHIRP a free download from the Internet and an accessory programming cable making loading all your favorite frequencies, PL tones and offsets easy. Another plus for the UV5R is, if you drop it and bust it you are only out fifty bucks, not 200 plus.

The UV-5Rs supplied rubber ducky antenna, to put it nicely, sux. Invest a few more bucks for a compatible and longer dual band antenna and you will be happy you did.

I was impressed enough to buy a second UV-5R and it is being used at the California QTH. Oh by the way, some accessories items that work on my Kenwood HT work on the UV-5R like the speaker microphone plus the UV-5Rs earphone-mic assembly works on my Kenwood.

If you are starting out in Ham Radio and need to get on the air cheap, or you want a backup HT to go in your ARES GO-Kit I recommend this El-Cheap-O Chinese transceiver. **73, W1ZE/6**



Midcoast ARES-CERT Participated in Sagadahoc County Tabletop Exercise.

Reported by KX1I & AA4AK



Woolwich, ME: In the the afternoon of January 22nd there was a table-top discussion at the Woolwich Central School. Dan/N5AGG, Harry/N1TTT, Steve/AA4AK and Marjorie/KX1I attended. The session was led by Sagadahoc EMA Director Eric Sawyer & Deputy Director Jason Shedlock. Also present were Principal Jason Libby, Sheriff Joel Merry, and a representative of the Woolwich Fire Department, 911 dispatch, police, teachers and aides.



The Woolwich Central School is a spiffy new school, about a mile north of the intersection of Rt 1 and Nequasset Rd (i.e. the dangerous intersection with the flashy light).

Steve Kercel gave rides to several HAMS, showing everyone features of his snazzy new hybrid, a Chevy Volt. The ride was smooth, very quiet and with lots of dials, buttons and screens.

The table-top scenario proposed the topic of an explosion in the wood-burning furnace (is this correct Harry & Steve?) during school hours. The weather was assumed similar to today which was clear, about 25 degrees F.

The exercise quickly became more of a discussion. The evacuation plan, presented by the school faculty, called for teachers to lead their students to the south parking lot. Buses would then transport everyone from the school to the Woolwich Church.

Subsequent topics included: communication to the superintendent's office, communication between the fire department and buses, police and traffic control (both at the school and church), emotional support for children and parents, and communication with parents.

It was asked if the EMA had any way to limit cell phone usage during an incident.

Other resources might include the Red Cross for emotional support and blankets.

Another resource would be (of course) the HAM radio community.

The school staff was told about Incident Command System, and will be sent the link to ICS-100.

During a teacher's workshop morning, teachers, staff, and bus drivers may participate in a walk-thru of an evacuation, and bus ride to the church.

The new Volt logged 86 miles per gallon for this excursion.

73, Marjorie & Steve



PREZ SEZ

By Dan Lindsley, N5AGG, Assoc. President

At last count, 4 MARA members have donated a total of \$610.00 to alleviate the burden of the purchase of two new Yaesu Fusion repeaters. If anyone else would like to contribute to the cause, please send your donation to club Treasurer Marjorie/ KX1I.

The Association has sold the three Rhon 45 tower sections and base plate previously purchased for Oak Hill. Jim McIrvin, N1IPA purchased the sections for use at his QTH. He wants to try and put the club 440 repeater antenna a little higher in an attempt to improve the coverage. We took a slight loss on the sale, but the club now has \$400.00 back in the treasury, and Harry/ N1TTT now has space for other stuff at his QTH. I was going to offer \$500.00, but ... :-)

The regular Monday night crew has begun meeting at the Red Cross again after the Holidays. Any interested person is welcome to attend and participate in the net at 1930 hrs (7:30 PM for you Military time challenged individuals).

Our next MARA meeting will be on January 29th at 7:00pm, with the CERT/ARES meeting an hour earlier. All interested hams and non-hams are welcome. We don't have a program scheduled at this time, so if you have an idea please do not hesitate to send me an email at lindsleydaniel@yahoo.com.

The Hamfest season will begin on February 7th, at the Calumet Club in Augusta. After that, comes the Andyfest and Nearfest and a boatload of others. A reminder, Nearfest admission will be free to attendees this spring only. Vendors will still have to pay.

Harry/ N1TTT, Marjorie/ KX1I, Steve/ AA4AK, and Daniel/ N5AGG attended the tabletop exercise at the Woolwich school on the 22nd. This was another great opportunity to be visible to the community and have input into disaster planning.

There will be a VE test session on February 2nd at the Red Cross in Topsham at 1800 hrs. Please remind everyone who has been studying for their licenses that we will be ready for the huge influx of test takers.

On an additional note, the Brunswick American Legion Post #20 may be moving into a new Post home soon. If so, there is a very good chance of them installing a ham shack for the use of licensed hams and for use during drills and disasters.

The National American Legion organization has been pushing every Post in the country and individual Legionnaires to become involved with disaster preparedness. There is ongoing discussion of possibly installing a ham shack at the Mid-Coast Veterans Council - Veteran Resource Center, at the old Navy Base in Brunswick where the Rec Center used to be located. This would mean prospective hams would need both classes and testing.

**73,
Daniel/ N5AGG**

