



Squelch Tales



Newsletter from the Merrymeeting Amateur Radio Association for July 2010



DR Alan Irwin, AB1KA, directing traffic at Topsham-Brunswick Memorial Day Parade

Mid Coast ARES-CERT Reacts on short notice

May 31st Topsham, ME: With Just a few short days in advance of Memorial Day, Harry McNelley, N1TTT, Sagadahoc EC and MARA activities coordinator received a plea for help from the parade organizes with traffic control for the events participants.

At 7:00am a skilled team consisting of:

- John Munton, N1OIG (event coordinator)
- Steve Kerchel, AA4AK (Net Control)
- Jim McIrvin, N1IPA (traffic control)
- Marjorie Turner, KX1I (traffic control)
- Alan Irwin, AB1KA (traffic control)

The MARA, ARES hams showed their capabilities and most likely and will be asked to help again nest year.

(photo by KX1I)

Correspondence from an Ex-patriot Mainer

By Peter Russell, K1MJP

Greetings from the Florida Spacecoast where I can see the Air Force launch pads from my window. Someone with too much time on their hands came up with expressions that you could rearrange all the letters and have a related sentence. One example is "The Morse code", rearrange letters and you get "Here come dots".

Recently my old trusty Fluke digital voltmeter developed LCD fade so one could not tell what the digits were reading. Being 25 years old, I figured the technology had



improved greatly so a newer one was in order. I went on the Fluke website and checked out current models, and on eBay to look at prices. Having some spare time on a Saturday, a visit to the local pawnshops produced some interesting results. I came away with a Fluke 75 for a good price and a new 9-volt battery. New Fluke test leads had been purchased recently for my old meter, so they fit right on the newer Fluke. I took a battery and known resistors to check each meter that I was interested in, so if you go shopping at the pawn places, make sure to test stuff out. Fluke now has a model 233 DVM with a detachable meter unit that you can remote up to 30 feet so you can connect the reading part to a transformer lets say and do some tuning away from that device. The meter costs around \$300 but imagine the uses. Look at it on their website.

I made it to the Dayton Hamvention and noted the attendance was up and the weather was much improved from last year. There seemed to be more of the 50's and 60's boat anchor equipment like Heathkit, Collins, Hallicrafter, Johnson, etc. Many two-way radio sellers there as well.

While there I picked up an old Harris broadcast exciter for parts to go with one recently purchased for my work at the Cocoa radio station. The ham operator that owns the station is thinking about setting up a 10-meter beacon. We have a 10-meter Ringo and a Kenwood TS-850 that has a bad receiver, but the transmitter works well. Ham Gadgets.Com (<http://www.hamgadgets.com>) has an ID-O-Matic II that is a programmable ID and will key the transmitter. Beacons are coordinated by WJ5O so when the unit is set up, I'll let folks know what frequency to listen to. Grid squares are now given in the ID.

73's Pete



MARA members attend ARRL New England Division Cabinet Meeting



On Saturday June 13th three MARA members representing the MARA (N1OIG), Mid Coast ARES (N1TTT) and as a League appointed official (AA4AK) motored their way to Boxborough, MA to attend the ARRL's New England Division Cabinet meeting.

During the daylong meeting many topics were discussed and as usual some topics were beat to death by individuals who had issues.

NE Division Cabinet Meeting

Boxborough MA

June 13, 2010

Topic outline by K1TWF

- I. Intro
 - a. Around the room
 - b. Scope of the meeting – share ideas, gather info for the League board meeting
- II. FCC update
 - a. Employee EMCOM issue
 - i. American Hospital Assn. made a proposal much like the League proposal – somewhat “middle of the road”
 - ii. FCC is taking comments
 - iii. Part 97 will no doubt be tweaked to ease up on the rules involving drill participation

- iv. Expect action this year
- b. Spread spectrum rules changing – automatic power control going away, power limited to 10w
- c. 5 MHz proposed readjustments
 - i. 1 channel change
 - ii. Power to 100 w
 - iii. CW and some digital
- d. Recon Robotocs
 - i. The things can operate in 420-450
 - ii. Some concern that we will interfere with them
- e. ARRL petition to open up more callsigns to extras
- f. Now the national broadband push
 - i. Expanded interest
 - ii. considerable bandwidth needed in VHF/UHF – threat to us ??

III. Agency hams and EMCOM

- a. Some concern about hams who get licensed solely for their employer/agency – are they “real hams”?
- b. Sense is that this should be encouraged
- c. In some cases, it’s unclear why agencies are sponsoring this stuff

- i. note the TSA program – lots of people licensed
- ii. seems to be little interest on the part of the people getting licenses in the hobby
- d. MARS in transition – becoming more broadly used by govt agencies – this may be behind some of the increase in agency licensing
- e. Looking at the number of active hams, we might be hard pressed to supply enough hams to handle a real regional emergency
- f. In general, there seems to be increasing interest in ham radio in the agencies, for whatever reason.

IV. Selling ham radio

- a. We need to market !!
- b. Show the kids how all the features on their iPhone came from ham radio
- c. PSA’s on public TV ??
- d. CW is getting stronger
- e. We need to publicize the field organization better to newcomers

V. Club activities

- a. Is the speaker selection getting thin ?
- b. Post more presentations on the League site

- c. Membership variable – some up, some down
- d. League membership up a little
- e. Membership is aging – seems to be all middle aged men
- f. School stations
 - i. Seem to be dying down
 - ii. Note funding available to support school programs

VI. ARRL goings on

- a. Red Cross MOU signed
- b. Kay Craigie, N3KN, is now president
- c. New EMCOM manager hired – Mike Corey W5MPC
- d. IT department has expanded !!! the web site mess is winding down slowly
- e. Electronic distribution of league materials

VII. ARRL Foundation

- a. Goldfarb scholarship won by a New Englander
- b. Several others won YCCC, Boxboro, and others

VIII. Items for the Board meeting

- a. Some investigation of candidates for elected positions – back ground check, perhaps ?
- b. Better standards ?
- c. Can we change the SM recall process ?

- i. Some problems with League materials showing up on the web
- ii. Expense of paper publishing is substantial
- iii. Concern that ARRL publications more expensive from us than from Amazon – problem is that we don't want to undercut our dealers

f. DXCC

- i. Expect some changes in the Caribbean – PJ
- ii. Remote operation - ok if legal - problem is enforcement. Decision is to leave procedures as they are

- g. IARU contest – some interesting rule issues for HQ stations – this year, HQ stations will not be scored

IX. Proceeds

- a. Auction - \$180 for ARRL Education Fund

(TNX K1TWF)

A more detailed discussion on the topics if interest from the meeting will be provided by the MARA attendees at the July monthly meeting.





2010 Field Day, Good Fun, Good Weather, Good Food!

Topsham: As in the past several years the MARA participated in this years Field Day event from the American Red Cross headquarters building. Again we operated in the 2F category. When operating in the "F" category it allows groups to set up early and that is what happened in Topsham. Friday morning AA4AK, KX1I, W1ZE and N1TTT started stringing up a plethora of wire antennas and staging radio equipment in the temporary radio shack.



Harry, N1TTT with the 6-meter Moxon

Saturday morning had the group putting the final touches to the antenna installations by hoisting the six meter Moxon up on the thirty foot push-up mast. Everything was all set to go at the two PM kick off.



Brian, AA1WI, Harry, N1TTT and Jim N1IPA made a noble attempt to get at least one satellite QSO but the space communications Gods did not adorn their favor on them this year. They could copy stations but could not make a connection. Oh well, next year.



Set-up crew taking a break before getting the contest underway

One of the categories in the operation is training. This year Bruce, W1ZE did a seminar and show-n-tell on HF mobile antenna installations



As usual, Steve Kerchel, AA4AK did an all-nighter CW run that logged in excess of 200 QSOs. That evening N1TTT, N1OIG and N5AGG filled the log with a

hundred plus PSK31 QSOs on 20 meters until the band closed up late in the evening.



One of the highlights of MARA's Field Days is the consumption of food. This year was no exception. Several folks provided chili, beef stew, salads, bean-dip and chips cheesecake, etc. A special thanks goes to Anita, John's (N1OIG) XYL for a Sunday morning breakfast consisting of waffle's, eggs, bacon, toast OJ and coffee.



Ham wanna-Bees at GOTA station

All in all this years Field Day can be considered a success with good participation, good food, good weather and good fun. **Hope to see you at Field day 2011**



Guess What This Is?



Hint: picture was taken in 1956

It's a hard disk drive back in 1956... with **5 MB** of storage. In September 1956 IBM launched the 305 RAMAC, the first 'SUPER' computer with a hard disk drive (HDD). The HDD weighed **over a ton** and stored a 'whopping' **5 MB** of data.

Do you appreciate your 8 GB memory stick a little more now?