



Squelch Tales



Newsletter from the Merrymeeting Amateur Radio Association for June 2009

Last Weekend this month is Field Day Come join the fun!



Larry Banks, W1DYJ, Wins April QST Cover Plaque Award



From ARRL web site <http://www.arrl.org>

The winner of the QST Cover Plaque Award for April was the MARA's new member Larry Banks, W1DYJ, of Harpswell and Woburn, MA, for his article "A 20 Meter Moxon Antenna." **Congratulations, Larry!**

The winner of the QST Cover Plaque award is given to the author of the best article in each issue. The winner is determined by a vote of ARRL members on the QST Cover Plaque Poll Web page. You can cast a ballot for your favorite QST article in the June issue by June 30th.

FCC Affirms Vanity Call Sign Rules in Al Corderman's favor

Information provided by the ARRL

The FCC dismissed a petition filed by Richard Essen, N6CX (ex-AB3IQ), of Silver Spring, Maryland, regarding the issuance of a vanity call sign to MARA member Allan Corderman. In its decision, the FCC said that Corderman's application for his new call sign was valid and the call sign was "properly granted" by the FCC.

On December 22, 2006, Winfield Brantley of Myrtle Beach, South Carolina surrendered his call sign -- W3ZD --when the FCC approved his application for a new call sign. On December 10, 2008, Allan Corderman, WB1EFN, of New Orleans, Louisiana, applied for W3ZD, stating he was a close relative of a former holder of the call sign. Section 97.19(c)(3) of the FCC rules regarding vanity call signs state that while a surrendered call sign is not available to the vanity call sign system for two years, certain relatives of the deceased former holder or clubs (in certain circumstances) may apply for the call

sign in the two year "grace period." Corderman stated in his application that he was the son of Roy C. Corderman, now deceased, and the first holder of the W3ZD call sign.

In January 2009, Richard Essen, N6CX (ex-AB3IQ) of Silver Spring, Maryland, petitioned the FCC, asking that the Commission reconsider Corderman's application for W3ZD, saying that the application should not have been granted because the exception in the vanity call sign system's rules apply only to close survivors of the *most recent person* to hold the call sign, and not to close relatives of *any* deceased prior holder.

The FCC disagreed with Essen's petition, saying that "[w]hen the Commission adopted Section 97.19(c)(3), it stated that it was granting priority to 'close relatives of deceased holders,' and did not say that the priority applied only to close relatives of certain deceased holders. The rule has always been interpreted to afford priority to close relatives of any deceased former holder."

According to Section 97.19(c)(3), "Except for an applicant who is the spouse, child, grandchild, stepchild, parent, grandparent, stepparent, brother, sister, stepbrother, stepsister, aunt, uncle, niece, nephew, or in-law; and except for an applicant who is a club station license trustee acting with the written consent of at least one relative, as listed above, of a person now deceased, the call sign shown on the license of [a] person now deceased is not available to the vanity call sign system for 2 years following the person's death, or for 2 years following the expiration of the license grant, whichever is sooner."



KS1R Field Day planning underway

By Steve Kerchel, AA4AK

Plans are coming along nicely for the MARA's 2009 Field Day operation, June 27-28. As in recent years, we plan to run a Class 2F operation from the Red Cross in Topsham. We will run data on 20 and 40 meters using the existing Red Cross data station



and a new permanent 20/40 meter trap dipole. The existing N1TRC Yaesu rig and a temporary G5RV antenna will serve as our GOTA (Get on the Air) station. The SSB/CW station will use Bruce's tuned feeder doublet on as many bands as come open. We will have a VHF station with Bruce's push-up VHF beams (Moxon?).

We are looking for a good turnout of new and inexperienced licensees for the GOTA station, and we are looking for GOTA coaches. If you



are new to HF this is your chance to get started in a supportive setting. If anyone is connected with the Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts or other youth groups, we would appreciate your

help are lining up young people (licensed or not) to make supervised contacts on the GOTA rig.

As in recent years, we will make a substantial effort on bonus points. Paul, Bruce and probably others will fire up the Red Cross generator. Marjorie will set up the public information table. Bruce will copy the ARRL message. Paul is planning an educational activity. We still need to firm up plans for satellite and solar powered contacts.

Harry's famous smoked turkey and Michele's special breakfast will be back.

As an item of added interest, the Red Cross will be having its own activities on the Saturday of Field Day. This goes to the reason that Field Day includes Class-F or EOC (Emergency Operations Center) operations. The idea is that in a real emergency we need to run our EM COMM activity (very often done at non-ham EOCs) without interfering with the normal operations at the EOC site. A Class-F Field Day on an active site is excellent practice for this critical skill.

We will put up antennas on Friday June 26 and Saturday morning June 27. Operation starts at 2 pm Saturday and ends 2 pm Sunday. Our goal is to keep the operating positions on the air round-the-clock. We're always cleaned up and off the site by 3 pm Sunday.

Although we have consistently scored high in recent years, we do not run a "go for blood" operation on Field Day. This is primarily an educational exercise. All members and friends of MARA, regardless of level of experience, are welcomed and encouraged to participate. As ever, MARA Field Day is family friendly; alcohol and other mind altering substances are not welcome. (Note: This has never been a problem at MARA Field Days, but people do occasionally ask about it.)

Please join us at the May 28 meeting of MARA as the Club continues to finalize its plans for Field Day.

73, Steve AA4AK



Scientists Predict Solar Cycle 24 to Peak in 2013

From ARRL Headquarters

Scientists predict that Solar Cycle 24 will peak in May 2013 with 90 sunspots per day on average. At the annual Space Weather Workshop held in Boulder, Colorado



last month, an international panel of experts led by NOAA's Space Weather Prediction Center (SWPC) predicted that Solar Cycle 24 will peak in May 2013 with 90 sunspots per day on average. If the prediction proves true, Solar Cycle 24 will be the weakest cycle since Solar Cycle 16 which peaked with 78 daily sunspots in

1928, and ninth weakest since the 1750s, when numbered cycles began.

The panel predicted that the lowest sunspot number between cycles -- the solar minimum -- occurred in December 2008, marking the end of Solar Cycle 23 and the start of Solar Cycle 24. If December's prediction holds up, at 12 years and seven months Solar Cycle 23 will be the longest since 1823 and the third longest since 1755. Solar cycles span 11 years on average, from minimum to minimum.

An unusually long, deep lull in sunspots led the panel to revise its 2007 prediction that the next cycle of solar storms would start in March 2008 and peak in late 2011 or mid-2012. The persistence of a quiet Sun also led the panel to a consensus that Solar Cycle 24 will be what they called "moderately weak."

Although the peak is still four years away, a new active period of Earth-threatening solar storms will be the weakest since 1928. Despite the prediction, the scientists said that Earth is still vulnerable to a energy and matter that escape from the Sun and may head toward Earth, where even a weak storm can damage satellites and power grids, disrupting communications, the electric power supply and GPS. A single strong blast of "solar wind" can threaten national security, transportation, financial services and other essential functions.

The most common measure of a solar cycle's intensity is the number of sunspots -- Earth-sized blotches on the Sun marking areas of heightened magnetic activity. The more sunspots there are, the more likely it is that solar storms will occur, but a major storm can occur at any time.

"As with hurricanes, whether a cycle is active or weak refers to the number of storms, but everyone needs to remember it only takes one powerful storm to cause huge problems," said NOAA scientist Doug Biesecker, who chaired the panel. "The strongest solar storm on record occurred in 1859 during another below-average cycle." The 1859 storm shorted out telegraph wires, causing fires in North America and Europe and sent readings of Earth's magnetic field soaring, as well as produced northern lights so bright that people read newspapers by their light, he said.

(Cont.)

Biesecker cited a recent report by the National Academy of Sciences that found if a storm that severe occurred today, it could cause \$1-2 trillion in damages the first year and require four to 10 years for recovery, compared to the \$80-125 billion of damage that resulted from Hurricane Katrina

The Space Weather Prediction Center is part of the National Weather Service and is one of the nine National Centers for Environmental Prediction. It is the nation's official source of space weather alerts, watches and warnings. SWPC provides real-time monitoring and forecasting of solar and geophysical events that impact satellites, power grids, communications, navigation and many other technological systems.

Editors Note: AA4AK and WIZE, the MARA's DX chasers started experiencing improved HF band conditions starting in early May. During the daytime hours 15, 12 and 10 meters have a few more spotty openings and 40 through 17 meters stay open into the late evening to the far corners of the planet. Working ZLs and VKs on 17 meters SSB at 10:30 at night can be a lot of fun!

Information on Practice Exams from KD0FNR

The following message was received by WIZE

Hi Bruce,

I just saw the Merrymeetinf Amateur Radio Association on the arrl.org web site and I noticed that you offer help for newcomers. I just created a set of free online exam practice tests that I hope hams will find useful. Within the practice tests, online study resources, (Wikipedia, NASA, ARRL, etc...), are provided for many of the questions. The list of resources available for each question is constantly growing because users can add their own favorite links to the study materials. Users can also track their test scores over time and see which sub-elements are giving them the most trouble.

You can see all the practice tests at:

<http://copaseticflow.blogspot.com/> Please let me know if you find it handy, or if you think of any ways to make it better. Also, if you think it's useful, please feel free to add a link to the practice exams at your site. Thanks!

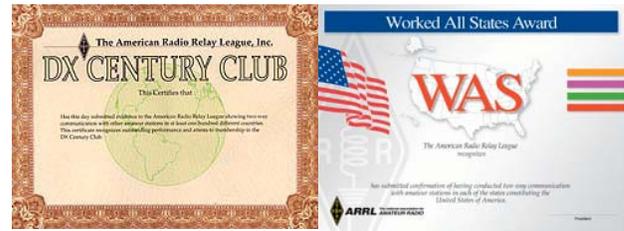
73 de KD0FNR Hamilton Carter

PS The tests were mentioned recently on kb6nu.com at:

<http://kb6nu.com/new-online-test/>. you can also see comments about the practice exams on the QRZ forums:

<http://forums.qrz.com/showthread.php?t=180904>

Maine now has Official ARRL Awards Checker



For those of you applying for you DXCC, VUCC, WAS or the WAC award and dreading the cost of mailing all your cards to Newington for verification and certification, you are in luck. Our Association's own Steve Kerchel, AA4AK has been nominated and appointed by the League as the Maine Section Field award certifying official.

Maine Section Manager, Bill Woodhead, N1KAT approached Bruce Randall, WIZE and asked if he could recommend a few people who may be interested in an appointment to that position for Maine. Bruce recommended Steve since he was an avid DXer who has DXCC (QRP) well in hand. Bill approached him and as usual said "OK".

If you get a chance, thank Steve for taking on another important and needed unpaid job assignment!

MARA to the rescue

Report by Bruce Randall, W1ZE

On Thursday, May 14th I received a call from Phippsburg Chief of Police requesting help from experienced community volunteers to assist the Town of Phippsburg put on their annual Bike Rodeo, a bike safety event the following Saturday. Chief Skronski advised he just received word that some volunteers would be unable to attend. He said, "I know it is very short notice but if you could get a few folks to help our it would be a very big help." I knew that it would not have much to do with radio communications but I went out with an email manning request, and like always I got quick replies from lots of MARA folks. Many already had commitments but I received word from five folks that they would be there to help and show the Ham Radio flag.

The MARA group consisting of Steve Kercol (AA4AK), John Monton (N1OIG), Donnie Dauphin (WD1F), Louise Dauphin (KB1IEF) and yours truly. Most of us were assigned to course way-stops to providing bike safety guidance with the assistance of Girl Scouts from the Phippsburg area. Since Donnie looked like he could handle a wrench he became the bike safety inspector and mechanic. There were other events scheduled that we all got to enjoy. Bath PD sent their K-9 unit and did a demo of what the police dog could do with the assistance of the Sagadahoc County Sheriffs Department. There was marshal-arts demonstration by the Phippsburg Ti-Kuan-Do class and other games for the kids. I want to thank all of you that responded to my request and those that came out to help. The MARA has "CAN DO" Hams.



The Pine State Amateur Radio Club

BANGOR HAMFEST

June 7, 2008

TIME: 6:30AM - Dealers and Tailgaters

Everyone Else - 8AM To 1PM

**WHERE: Hermon High School, RTE #2
Hermon, ME.**

**ADMISSION: \$5.00 Public (children
under 12 FREE) Tailgaters & Dealers,**

tables are not available so bring your own table or tailgate

DIRECTIONS: I-95 Exit-180 (Cold Brook RD.) North to RTE#2. Left onto RTE. #2 and go west for 1½ miles to Herman HS on right. From Newport, travel east 25-miles to the light in Herman. Stay on Rte-2L for ½ mile to the school.

DOOR PRIZES: Tailgaters and Vendor prize \$25 cash

Grand Prize: \$150.00 HRO Gift Certificate

FOOD: By Sophomore Class of Herman HS.

DEMONSTRATIONS: Packet & Homebrew 2-meter antenna,, ECHOLINK, APRS, etc.

ARRL Exams, All levels + CW Proficiency tests for 5, 13, 20, certificates will be issued to those that pass.

TALK-IN FREQ: 146.34/94 Repeater (PL100) & Simplex 146.52

**CONTACT PERSON: ROGER W. DOLE
KA1TKS rdole@hermon.net**

Club: www.n1me.com

Bring the family and visit these local attractions:

- MAINE DISCOVERY MUSEUM
- COLE LAND TRANSPORTATION MUSEUM
- BLACKBEARD MIN-GOLF AND GO-CARTS
- BANGOR MALL: ORONO BOG
- BOARDWALK:
- PENOBSHOT NARROWS BRIDGE AND OBSERVATORY
- THREE GOLF COURSES
- 4 CAMPGROUNDS AND MANY MOTELS IN THE AREA
- HOLLYWOOD SLOTS RACINO

www.n1me.org

Note: You are invited to the Maine Pine Tree Chapter QCWA buffet lunch & meeting imedately following the Hamfest at the Happy China restraint at the Bangor Mall. Come



see what they are all about. For more info on the QCWA, contact Chapter president Bruce Randall, W1ZE at w1ze@arrrl.net.

