



# Squelch Tales



Newsletter from the Merrymeeting Amateur Radio Association for November 2012



## KS1R D-Star Repeater

### “LOOKIN’GOOD!”

It appears that the efforts of Donnie Dauphin (WD1F) and Bill Messier (K1MNW) on the new KS1R D-Star repeater have been met with great success. Donnie’s extensive efforts in obtaining the repeater and research in how to make it play well into the D-Star network were enhanced by Bill’s RF repeater engineering expertise.

The repeater has a home in Bill’s commercial tower building and placed into a nice clean equipment rack along with its associated desktop PC.

The Tech-Committee duo has been testing repeater coverage and has noted very good coastal coverage with the exception of a few directions shaded by the tower. Bill’s plan is to move the repeaters UHF four-pole vertical array to the very top of the tower and that should eliminate the few shaded areas. From the top of that tower coverage should be a large wide area of southern and central Maine.

On a very positive note, usage of the KS1R D-Star repeater is growing with several MARA members logged in and using it. Folks around the country have discovered KS1R and connecting with the various users here in Maine. The week October 16th, with the aid if a little lift enhancement, D-Star users near Salem,

New Hampshire were making direct contact to KS1Rs D-Star repeater.

Donnie has already exceeded the pay-back requirements set forth By ICOM. He has reported the success to ICOM and they should be reimbursing Donnie for his up-front investment in near future.

Donnie advised that you can get into the KS1R repeater pretty well with just an D-Star capable HT. He also noted that ICOM has the new ID-31A 440 only HT on the market that does analog (FM) and D-Star.



Check-out:

<http://www.icomamerica.com/en/products/amateur/handheld/ID31A/default.aspx>

and

<http://www.radio-mart.net/Icom-ID-31A-Transceiver.html>

Donnie also reports that it appears thea Kenwood will start introducing D-Star capable equipmenmt shortly

WD1F & K1MNW will provide an update of how the D-Star and other Association repeaters are doing at the next MARA meeting.

On October 21<sup>st</sup> Donnie emailed the following to the current D-Star users:

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*Hello all,*

*On Saturday October 20<sup>th</sup> Bill (K1MNW), John (N1OIG), and I made a change to the antenna system on the D-Star machine. We disconnected the commercial 4-bay dipole at ~160' and swapped to a Diamond X50NA at 250'(+/- 500' above sea level). We are*

looking for more reports, so if you can, listen on 447.575 listen to the data stream audio and send me a signal report reports at:

[ddauphin@ddrov.com](mailto:ddauphin@ddrov.com) that would be a big help in establishing a coverage map.

Here are some signal reports we have received so far:

**WD1F:** Major improvement. With side mounted antenna Bath and Phippsburg were very weak due to the tower blocking this direction. Now I can work the repeater all the way to my house when mobile. I can even use the repeater from a HT at home being careful where I stand.

**N1YAG** Ron in Bowdoin: Was S9 with side mounted commercial 4-bay dipole, now S5. \*\*My notes: I believe this drop in signal strength comes from a couple of things. First is the 4-bay dipole was facing Ron's QTH and had the tower behind it potentially acting as a reflector. The 4-bay dipole had higher gain.

**N10XG** Bryan in Harpswell: Major improvement. He can work the repeater on low power from his HT in most places. With med power (2.5w) its much more reliable. This is a significant improvement as Bryan was in a area blocked by the tower.

**W1AUX** Mark in Damariscotta. Went from S9+5db to S9+30db \*\*Thats a very large increase of 25db.

**W1ZE** Bruce along the Kennebec river in Phippsburg reports (receive only) a 30db over S9 signal.

Please take the time and try to get into the repeater and let us know how the antenna swap has effected you.

Thanks, Donnie



## Squelch Tales Editor to become a Snowbird

By Bruce Randall, W1ZE



In a repeat of last year, Bruce Randall, W1ZE, the newsletter editor, that's me, will QSY along with YL Donna from Phippsburg to the far southern portion of W6-land to keep from shoveling snow.

We will up-anchor on or about November 23, head south on I-95 to Washington, DC; Richmond, VA; central NC; then hopefully have a visit with another MARA snowbird, Al Corderman W3ZD in New Orleans before heading west on I-10 in the direction of Poway (San Diego), CA. I will be driving old W1ZE/Mobile (Nissan Rogue) along with goodies slated for a small low profile ham shack in Poway. I have an Arrow (clone) dual-band J-Pole I built for VHF/UHF and a Tarheel 400A (KW rated) screwdriver antenna that will be used as my main HF antenna. Donna lives in a very nice upscale manufactured home park but her home has almost no antenna room and a big HF antenna would surly alarm the neighborhood. Good news is, her home has all aluminum siding and large metal carport that will act as a very good vertical antenna counterpoise. The antennas are small, narrow and painted black so they should fade into the surrounding tree line.

While traveling southwest I plan to do a little HF while Donna takes turns at the wheel. Maybe I could make QSOs back to Maine on the way as I did two years ago.

On a second note, since I will be in W6-land until the 1<sup>st</sup> of May, getting a "Squelch Tales" newsletter out every month may be iffy at best. I will try to get one out on a periodic basis. But - if some

nice person would like to take over the newsletter during that period, that would be GREAT!  
73, Bruce W1ZE

**MARA  
members  
operate  
N1S**



Reported by Daniel Lindsley, N5AGG

During this weekend of October 19-21 a group of MARA members consisting of Steve, AA4AK; Harry, N1TTT; Marjorie, KX1I; Fran, K1BBJ; John, K1JJS; Don, KA1WAL and Dan, N5AGG gathered at the Maine Maritime Museum in Bath to set-up and operate the N1S Jamboree On The Air (JOTA) ham radio station for Maine Boy Scouts and Explorers Jamboree gathering.



On Friday the group spent two hours setting up the antenna mast and doublet antenna near the museum building. The station set-up was inside the museum overlooking the yard and Kennebec River.

That Saturday Dan and Harry operated until Saturday afternoon when Steve came back about 2PM. During the demo

to the Scouts, Dan worked some pretty good DX with QSOs with VK3MO in Kyneton, Australia and D44AC in Cape Verde plus 3 other stateside contacts. Unfortunately 20-meters stayed below par all weekend. However Steve made a lot of CW contacts.

Three hams from the Wireless Society of Southern Maine, WS1SM set-up and worked several stations on 40-meters.

Harry N1TTT returned Saturday night to help Steve. Dan came back on Sunday morning, while Fran and Marjorie came back in time to help take down the antenna.

All in all the event was a success and exposed young folks to Amateur Radio.



**The MARA Executive  
Board and Newsletter  
Editor wishes all you  
Squelch Tales readers  
a very happy  
Thanksgiving holiday  
with family and  
friends**