



SQUELCH TALES



**Newsletter from the Merrymeeting Amateur Radio Association
for May 2023**



Time to Get Ready for Field Day

From the ARRL Newsletter



ARRL Field Day is just over a month away, but like spring cleaning, it pays to start getting ready now.

2023 Field Day will be held June 24 - 25. It is ham radio's open house. Every June, hams throughout North America set up temporary transmitting stations in public places to demonstrate ham radio's science, skill and service to communities and the nation. It combines public service, emergency preparedness, community outreach, and technical skills all in a single event. Some participants may also choose to operate from home, using the exercise to develop and practice their personal radio communications capability.

Field Day has been an annual event since 1933 and remains the most popular event in ham radio.

In 2022, 4,929 entries were submitted (including check logs), and there was a total of 29,679 reported participants.

Field Day is open to all amateurs in the areas covered by the ARRL/RAC Field Organizations and countries within IARU Region 2. DX stations residing in other regions may be contacted for credit and may submit entries as check logs.

The main focus of Field Day is to work as many stations as possible on the 160-, 80-, 40-, 20-, 15-, and 10-meter HF bands, all bands on 50 MHz and above, and to learn to operate in abnormal situations in less-than-optimal conditions. A premium is placed on developing skills to meet the challenges of emergency preparedness and acquaint the general public with the capabilities of amateur radio.

For Field Day 2023, several rules changes have been made. It's a good idea to make sure that your logging software has been updated to the most current version to incorporate these rule changes including the updated Canadian sections list. There are many facets to operating on Field Day and knowing the rules and keeping good logs are paramount to successful contacts.

Many local amateur radio clubs participate in ARRL Field Day. To start preparing for Field Day, check out arrl.org/field-day for the official rules and all the information you'll need. To find a participating radio club in your area, use the Field Day Locator on the page.

Your MARA plans to participate in field day this year with a modified operating schedule, most likely 1F or 2F from the Topsham Red Cross Headquarters. So stay tuned.

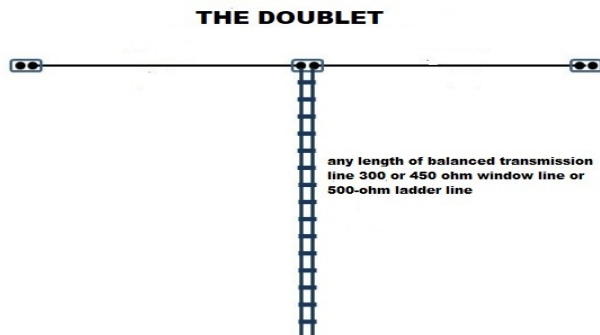
Have fun. QRZed FIELD DAY!



If I could only have one multi-band HF antenna, what would it be?

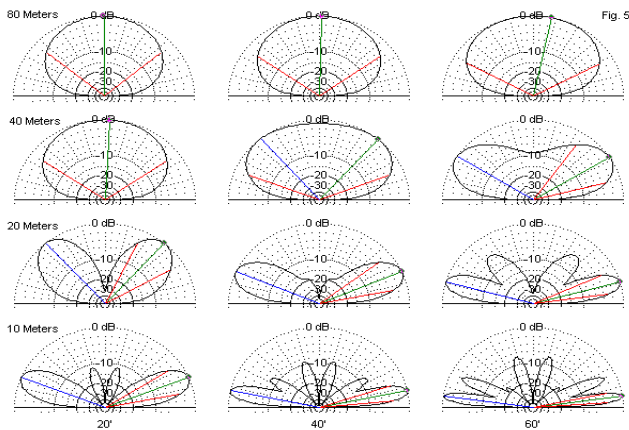
By WIZE with expert backup from L.B.Celik, W4RNL(SK)

The title question is a good one, especially for folks starting out in this great hobby. My quick answer is the venerable "DOUBLET" which is just a dipole feed with balanced feeders (450-ohm window line or ladder line) allowing multi-band operation.



If you have enough headroom to make the antenna length about 130 feet and with a feed point dead center on the antenna it will perform nicely from 3.5 to 30 MHz and all the ham bands in between.

The radiating pattern on 80 meters will be the classic figure eight but as you work higher in frequency the radiating pattern will start looking like a four leaf clover or daisy. The elevated pattern will go from up on the lower frequencies to out on the higher frequencies depending on your height above ground.



Selected Elevation Patterns: 135' Doublet on 80, 40, 20, and 10 Meters (Pattern taken along the line of maximum gain.)

Several years ago ham radio antenna guru L.B. Celik published the very informative article on the "Doublet" that was full of very good information.

<http://www.antentop.org/w4rnl.001/edu6.html>

I highly recommend you read the article and find out why I and many others think the doublet is an effective one size fits all antenna.



A reminder to QCWA Maine Pine Tree Chapter 134 members & friends, that the next Pine Tree Chapter meeting will be held at Hampden's Anglers Restaurant the first Saturday in June following the Herman Hamfest. Hope you can attend.



MARA upgrades it's Association Logo and Banner



Last month Marjory Turner, KX1I with the approval of the membership went on a quest to have a newer club banner made and in the process a graphic upgrade of the MARA logo.



New banner layout

Thanks Marji for another job well done.





**T
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DIY Walmart Lightning Arrester

By Bruce Randall, W1ZE

As summer weather approaches we hams should be thinking about protecting our expensive radio equipment from the frequent lightning events that wonder through Maine on a semi regular basis.

You can buy a coax feed line arresters like L-Com, Arcadian, PolyPhase and even old MFJ. But they are not cheap. They are available from your favorite ham radio dealer and even places like Amazon.



However a lot of us have end fed wire antennas, dipoles and doublets fed with open wire balanced feeders like 450 and 300 ohm twin lead. Several years ago I added a column in this newsletter on how to build a balanced feed line lightning arrester. I have used that little device for years and as far as I can tell it works OK.

Many years ago, I think in the ARRL's Hints & Kinks publication there was a description on how to use an automotive spark plugs to do the same thing I did with my home brew arrester which I used

in line 450-ohm twinlead feeding my 80-meter skyloop. Over the years it has weathered a bit so I decided to build another but this time I would use two spark plugs.

I went shopping at Walmart and the automotive section and found a small selection of Autolite spark plugs and noted the 4194 plug was small and had a 3/8" M10 thread that I thought I could find a nut for. The plug was just a few bucks so I purchased two.



In the Wally-world stationary supply area I found a small clear plastic pen+Gear pencil box about the length of a Crayon box that I could mount the two



spark plugs to. The little box would be semi weatherproof if located outside. I could mount the plugs through the lid them secure them with a M10

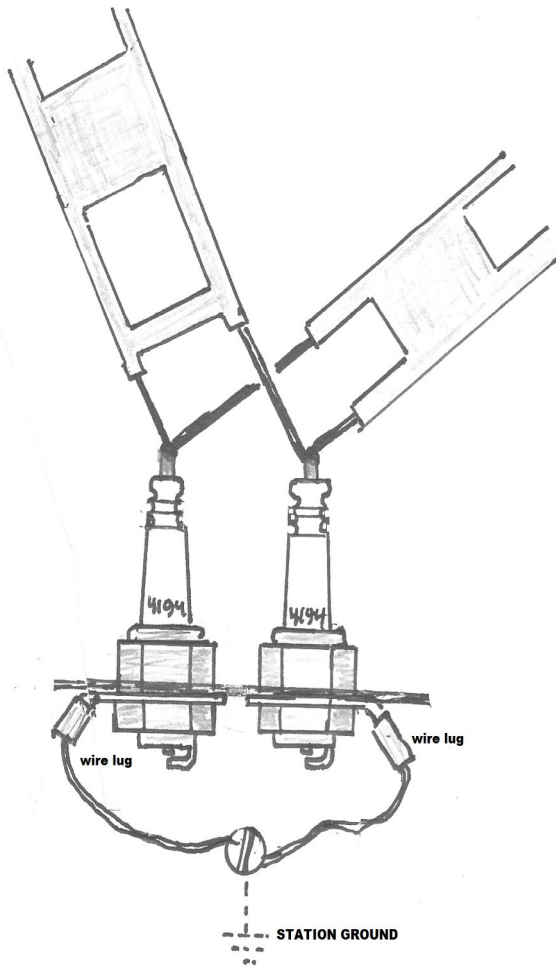
machine nuts over a crimp (yellow) 5.5-10 large ring wire lug as the ground connection points.

At Rocky's ACE hardware store in Bath I found the oddball 3/8" M10 stainless steel nuts I needed to secure the spark plug and wire lug to the plastic lid. I then soldered some No.12 stranded copper wire from the two ground connection lugs to a grounding connection point (screw & nut) and this connection point is connected to your good station ground system

The top of the spark plug metal terminal can be unscrewed and used to secure the twin led connectors to the plug

A 10m FM Antenna to fit into my Attic

By Larry Banks, W1DYJ, who to do a ZOOM presentation during May 9th MARA meeting



I am the Minuteman Repeater Association (Boston Area) Tuesday night Technical Information and Other Stuff net manager. I needed 10m FM capability to monitor that repeater during the net.

I have a 6m FM vertical in my attic to monitor the MMRA 6m repeater, and decided to put a 10m FM vertical in my attic without adding another coax run. My internal attic height is ~5'; a 10m vertical dipole is ~8' with 16' diameter radials so I had to shorten both the height and the radials.

This also gave me an opportunity to learn about using coax as a matching network.

73, Larry

This should be a very informative shoe-n-tell so come to the meeting or attend via the ZOOM connection.

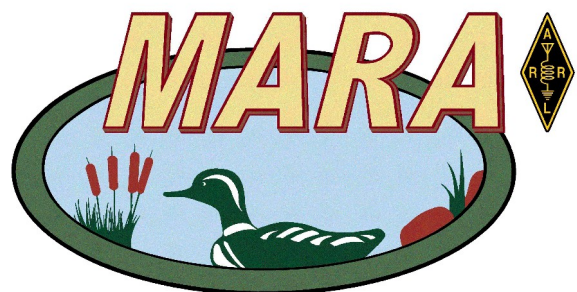
If you want to use a spark plug arrester on an end fed wire antenna you only need to use one spark plug. I built one for my 110-foot end fed inverted "L" antenna.

Enjoy your summer & 73, W1ZE



NEQP!

The New England QSO Party is **May 6-7**. Let's get Maine on the air and give people around the country and globe a chance to work the Pine Tree State and YOUR county. This is a fun contest and a great opportunity for you to "Work All States" as well. More info is at neqp.org.





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