SQUELCH TALES

Newsletter from the Merrymeeting Amateur Radio Association

for July 2025

MARA SUPPORTS MEMORIAL DAY WEEKEND MILES TO MILLS RUN

By Marjorie Turner, KX1I

Net Control, W1KCA & K1ALZ - Water Stop 1 - 20 minutes after START. kx1i - photo

The sun graced the 14th annual Miles to Mills benefit run for the Travis Mills Foundation at the Brunswick Landing on Sunday, May 25th.

kx1i - photo

Twelve amateur radio operators provided communications between the Race, five water stops and various roving golf carts.

Miles for Mills - May 25, 2025 - more than 1,600 participants at Brunswick Landing

Simon, N1URA manning his water station No.5

More than 1,600 runners, walkers, wheelchairs, baby carriages and dogs participated in the event to help raise money for calibrated veterans and a retreat in Belgrade.

Miles for Mills - May 25, 2025 - more than 1,600 participants at Brunswick Landing

The 5KM and 10KM routes for the event wove confusingly around construction. Participants ranged from (roughly) age five to seventy five. The event also served as training for rescue units, as they carried bunker/incident gear, wore firefighter suits, or carried 40-pound rescue packs. Support groups commemorated a friend of family member.

Miles for Mills - May 25, 2025 - more than 1,600 participants at Brunswick Landing

Thanks to: Activity Chair, Shauna/K1ALZ; Robert/W1TON; Eric/W1KCA; Dave/KB1OJW; John/K1JJS; Jim/N1IPA; Bruce/W1ZE; Mike/N1MA; Marjorie/KX1I; Cory/KU1U; Simon/N1URA; and Rick/N1WFO. MARA thanks the members of AARC who joined us.

2025 Northeast HamXposition:

Call to Clubs

Dear ARRL Affiliated Clubs,

We are working hard to improve HamX by bringing in more vendors, more sponsors, better forums, a better flea market, and great prizes. We also need help from clubs to promote HamX within the local clubs. We need more participation that gets more vendors excited to attend.

For example, the Friday night DX themed banquet is sponsored by DX Engineering this year. DXE has donated a $3300 Icom IC-7610 HF transceiver.

As of now, there is $8000 of door prizes to be awarded, and we expect more. If you attend Saturday night's banquet, you could win a Yaesu FT-710 Field. There are some great prizes that will be awarded at Sunday afternoon's door prize drawings, too.

We need your help publicizing HamX and urging your members to attend.

Thank you for your help promoting your New England Convention!

Larry, W1AST

JS8Call

HAVE YOU TRIED IT YET?

By Bruce Randall, W1ZE

What is heck is JS8Call you may ask? Well, It is an experimental digital communications platform that was developed to assess the feasibility of combining the resilience of FT8 with a usable messaging system ideal for weak signal HF communication. Its user-friendly function makes for easy keyboard messaging. Like WSJT-X, Fldigi, and FSQCall, JS8Call is a very functional system set up for ham radio. Although JS8Call shares its roots with WSJT-X, it is an independently derived, restructured for message passing using an FT8 modulation known as JS8.

Many old seasoned hams said that FT8 was just a computer communicating with another computer over the airways to exchange signal reports and nothing else. That is mostly true, but if all you want to quickly add to your award paper chase (DXCC, WAC, WAZ, etc.) it works.

JS8Call has the weak signal capabilities of FT9, FT8 and FT4 but adds keyboard to keyboard communications, more like PSK31.

For more info on this newer friendly digital weak signal mode, I recommend you check the information available at the following websites for further details:

http://js8call.com/

https://unicomradio.com/js8call/#JS8Call_Frequencies

73, W1ZE

2025 ARRL Maine State Convention & Hamfest

The 2025 ARRL Maine State Convention and Hamfest will be held in the Augusta Maine Civic Center, Saturday, August 2nd from 8AM until Noon. Consider signing up for a table. Clubs are encouraged to get a table as well. Great opportunity to hand out membership applications and showcase what your club is all about. Attendance and table purchases help support the Androscoggin Amateur Radio Club's programs which includes a scholarship fund. Grand Door prize will be a Yaesu FT-991A HF/VHF/UHF radio. Please consider supporting this event. There will also be talks and on demand VE testing, walkins welcome. w1npp.org/convention

73 DE KU1U

Cory

A 6-METER MOXON & ME

By Bruce Randall, W1ZE

As many of you know I have been a fan of the six meter band especially in the SSB, CW and FT8 modes. I am no where as big a 6 meter buff like K1TOL or K1SIX but I do enjoy the challenge of that Magic band.

Over the years I have used a verity of six meter antennas, especially beams ranging from 4 and 5 element Yagis and even a multi band SteppIR beam that included a four element on six meters. Those antennas helped me make contact and confirm over a hundred grid squares landing me a single-band (50MHz) VUCC award.

Since the XYL has banned me from climbing towers and roofs now that I'm well into my 80s I had to modify my high tower and beam configuration and go to a crank down and tip over tubular tower that lets me work on antennas from ground level.

I put up a six element Log Periodic Dipole Antenna (beam) that coveres 20 to 10 meters but I needed a beam type antenna for six meters. Since I had experience with 10MHz Moxon antennas I decided to put up a MFJ Six Meter Moxon. It was a well built antenna made from aluminum tubing. I am pleased to say that antenna worked just as well as my previously build wire element Moxons. One of those wire Moxon was used by the MARA on Field Day in years past with very good success.

The MFJ Moxon like the other wire moxons performs well and has let me work a ton of stations during during enhanced band conditions. I have worked stations all over the USA and into Europe and the Caribbean with it.

Unfortunately, MFJ is going out of business and their six meter Moxon may not be available, but if one wants to use a Moxon to try out six meter, why not build one yourself.

Here is a reprint of the Moxon article from the August 2008 MARA's Squelch Tales newsletter

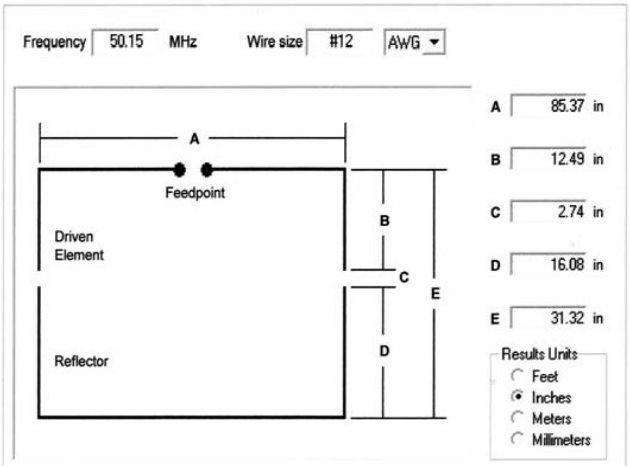
Field Day Six-Meter Moxon. Roll your own

A month before the 2008 Field Day event I gave my four-element six-meter Yagi to Donnie Dauphin, WD1F who is very happy with it sitting atop his 120-foot tower in Phippsburg. This is the same antenna we have used the past two years during Field Day and the N1P special event station. I was in hopes that six meters would come alive during Field Day this year and the only antenna I had for the event was an

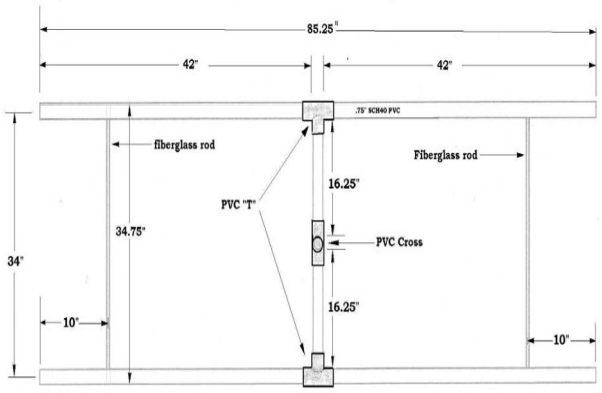
Armchair Squalo (a QST project). A directional antenna would be better because most of the stations we would work on that band would be south and west of Topsham.

I have read about and viewed several short two-element beams called a Moxon that has been getting a lot of press and lots of folks building them. The Moxon is a two element Yagi with the wire ends bent inward facing the opposite element.

I thought the Moxon would be a good inexpensive antenna to build for Field Day. I went to the web to see what I could find. I Googled the word Moxon and get dozens of hits. I then refined my search to six- meter Moxon and came up with another dozen hits. I even found a web site that had a Moxon calculator. Just enter the frequency and wire size and it gives you all the wire length dimensions

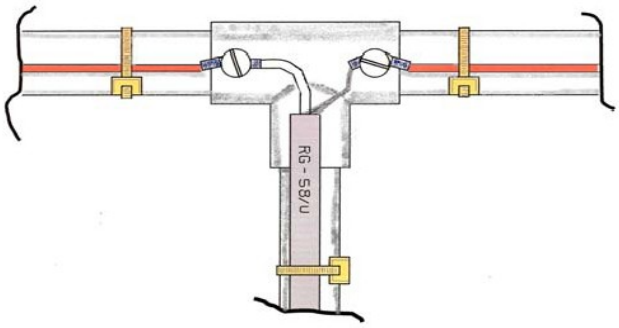


Being a guy that likes to build small antennas from PVC pipe I thought the Moxon would be a good candidate. After some calculation on the old graph paper I headed off to the local hardware emporium to gather up the stuff to build a six-meter Moxon antenna frame. I purchased two 10-foot lengths of ¾ inch schedule 40 PVC pipe, two ¾ inch PVC pipe Tees and a ¾ inch PVC pipe cross connection. While brousing through the store I noted a display rack with bicycle flag whips used to keep an eye on your kids in a crowd. The whip was made with ¼-inch fiberglass rod stock. I thought that would make a pair of stiffening rods to keep the PVC pipe element from bending in when the wire elements were tightened up.



6-Meter Moxon support structure

About an hour in the workshop had the frame assembled and I had cut the needed # 12 wire in accordance with the Moxon calculation program. I assembled the feed- point of the driven element using a couple stainless steel 6-32 screws and nuts. I applied crimp-on connectors to the end of the wire and attached them to the feed point.



The element end insulator needed to be 2¾ inches apart so I thought of using some scrap PVC but came up with an idea I thought would work and it did. I made the end tie-insulator out of some heavy Weed-Whacker® monofilament line and two crimp type wire splicing sleeves (blue)

I made the antenna so it would have a 15-inch section of PVC pipe that would slide into the push-up mast and another three-foot PVC pipe section above the antenna to mount the 2-meter and 70cMeter halo antennas. We attached a halyard line to the antenna so we could rotate it if necessary. At the feed point I used s short section of RG-58U coax with a few ferrite beads slid over it to act as a 1:1 current balum. If you do not have a ferrite chokes, you could build a choke balum by making a four or

five turn coil in the coax feed line about six inches in diameter at the antenna feed point.
Then came the acid test. With the Moxon at 30-feet and the coax hooked up to my FT-897D I tuned-up on 50.125 and "YIPEE" I had an SWR of less that 1.2:1 and I could hear stations thundering in. Good time to have the band open. We rotated it to check the front to back and it was what you would expect for a two element Yagi, about 15db change on the S-meter while tuned to the WB1OJB beacon in Bowdoin about 6 miles away (ground wave).

If you want a small effective but cheap six-meter beam, try a Moxon. I think you will be pleased with the results and have fun building one.

There is a lot of info out there on the Internet about Moxon antennas and how to build them, so you may want to look them up and see if maybe a SIX METER MOXON could be in your future.

73, Bruce, W1ZE

QCWA Maine Pine Tree Chapter 134 Information column

The next Chapter meeting will take place during the ARRL Maine State Convention on August 2nd. Cory, KU1U has reserved us a place to hold the meeting. We hope you can attend the Convention and our Chapter meeting as we have length of service awards to present along with PCN frequent flyer certificates.

Non members are invited to attend the Chapter meeting as guests to see what we are all about in the hopes that if you have been a ham for 25 years you may want to consider becoming a member of the National QCWA and also the local Maine Pine Tree Chapter 134.

See you there and 73,

Bruce Randall, **W1ZE (Chapter Sec./Tres.)**

BECOME AN ELMER

Why not help someone become a licensed Amateur Radio Operator and join us all in this great hobby.

HAPPY INDEPENDENCE DAY TO ALL SQUELCH TALES READERS