

MARA W1/GaZette



March 2008

MONTACHUSETT AMATEUR RADIO ASSOCIATION

Vol 50 No. 7

Next Meeting

Wednesday, March 12
7:30PM
Lunenburg Public Library

Barry Fox, W1HFN
[speaker's choice]

The March MARA meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, March 12 in the Wallace room of the Lunenburg Public Library. MARA member Barry Fox W1HFN will be the featured speaker.

The Lunenburg Public Library is on Route 2A (Massachusetts Ave.) just east of the center of town.

Advance notice: the April MARA meeting will *not* be held at this location. Look for an upcoming location announcement. The April meeting is planned to be a QSL card sort.

Who, How, or What got you interested in Amateur Radio? Tell us your story. Please mail it to Ralph <kd1sm@arrl.net>. If you'd prefer to be interviewed and have someone else do the writing, let Ralph know that too. We'll publish stories as we receive them.

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Contributors To This Issue:

N1MGO, KB1JXJ, WA0SAP, W1HFN

Do We Have Your Address?

An electronic version of the W1/GaZette is sent every month to the MARA members' discussion list <mara@w1gz.org>. All MARA members whose email addresses have been given to the newsletter editor are subscribed to this list (unless specifically requested otherwise). If you have not been receiving these messages and would like to do so, send an email to Ralph so he will have your address. MARA members occasionally use this list for other announcements as well.

The weather cancellation of the February meeting was announced over the air on 145.45 as well as via the members' email list. If you did not receive the notice, we don't have your address. Please let Ralph know of your preferences at <kd1sm@arrl.net>

Watt's Happening

Sundays, 0800 local 5330.5 (ch 1) USB
Western Mass Emergency 60M Net
Alternate frequencies are 5346.5 (ch 2),
5366.5 (ch 3), 5371.5 (ch 4), and 5403.5 (ch 5).

Sundays, 0830 local 3937
Western Mass Emergency Net. Alternate
frequency is 3942 in case of QRN, QRM, or
frequency in-use. Also a good idea to scan up
and down 10kHz if you cannot find the net.

Sundays, 0900 local 145.45-
Montachusett Emergency Net

Mondays, 2000 local 147.525 simplex
Worcester Emergency Simplex Net

Tuesdays, 1930 local 145.37-
Templeton Emergency Net

Wednesdays, 2100 local 28.341
Harvard Repeater Club
10 meter sideband net "Activity Night"

Nightly, 2100 local 146.97-
Central Mass Traffic Net

First Monday, 1900 local 3943, 7245
RACES Net

First Wednesday, 2000 local 3915
K1ARC Red Cross Net
<http://www.qsl.net/k1arc/>

Saturday, 5 April, Londonderry NH
IRS Hamfest

Sunday, 6 April, Framingham
FARA Hamfest

Sunday, 20 April, Cambridge
Flea at MIT; third Sunday April-October

For more information and other 'Fests, see
<http://web.mit.edu/w1gsl/Public/ne-fleas>

VE Team Report

The February MARA/Harvard Repeater Association VE session had no exam candidates pre-registered so the session was canceled. The next session is scheduled for March 26.

The MARA/HRC VE Team holds exam sessions on the fourth Wednesday of the month. Those wishing to take exams are asked to pre-register with Paul KD1YH at 978-597-6535.

If we have no pre-registered candidates by the weekend prior to the scheduled session we will cancel the session.

Public Service Events

April 18 - Squannacook Canoe Race

April 21 - Boston Marathon

April 27 - Groton Road Race



DICK WILBORG W1ZC
JOHN ROSE WW1Z

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Tell them you saw it in the W1/GaZette

The MARA W1/GaZette

is published by the Montachusett Amateur Radio Association just prior to the monthly meeting. The newsletter is distributed free to members and friends of Amateur Radio.

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The deadline for materials to appear in the W1/GaZette is noon on the Sunday before the first Wednesday of the month.

NEWSLETTER STAFF:

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Annual Dues: Regular \$25
Family \$30
Fixed income \$15
Meetings: 2nd Wednesday, 7:30pm
September to June

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MARA owns and operates the W1GZ repeater on 145.45 (CTCSS 74.4) in Fitchburg.

February Meeting Report

13 February 2008

The meeting was canceled due to inclement weather.

Next Meeting:

12 March 2008 7:30-pm
Lunenburg Public Library

Speaker
Mr. Barry Fox W1HFN

Subject to be decided Surprise!!!!!!!

Respectfully Submitted,
Pauline R. Carulli, KB1JXJ
Secretary

WØS Special Event Station

de Dave WA0SAP

April 12-13

The 96th Anniversary of the Titanic Disaster

Your club members have been invited to come operate with us in Branson, MO for the 96th Anniversary of the Titanic Disaster. Last year our press release hit 111 news wire services around the world in two days. This is an internationally recognized Special Event Station and here is a once in a lifetime opportunity to participate.

Icom is our official supplier of radio equipment. Last year we had two Icom 756 Pro III

transceivers and two PW-1 amplifiers. If more HF stations are needed, Icom will supply us as many stations as needed. We have crank up towers with TA-33 beams, as well as, wire dipoles for the lower frequencies. There is room for all, hams and non-hams. We are in full view of the public between the Entrance and Exit outside the Museum. This is to honor the two brave wireless operators Jack Phillips and Harold Bride.

Please visit our website at www.wØs.org for more information and scheduling of operating times. All updates for this event will be on this website, so please visit often for new information. We would appreciate this announcement on your local nets and club website. If any questions, please feel free to contact me at waØsap@att.net.

Thank you from the "Titanic Four":
 Dave "SAP" Beckler WAØSAP, Al Gallo WØERE, Rich Vogt KB9YZE, and Rod Kittleman KØADI

NEAR-Fest and Christa McAuliffe Planetarium Project Underway

THE NEW ENGLAND AMATEUR RADIO FESTIVAL at The Deerfield (NH) Fairgrounds, May 2nd and 3rd 2008

DEERFIELD, NH: 1 February 2008. As announced at Deerfield on October 13th, 2007, the proceeds from NEAR-Fest II will go to funding a fully operational amateur radio station to be located at the CHRISTA McAULIFFE PLANETARIUM in Concord NH. This station will be capable of communicating with the International Space

Station (ISS) and the NASA Space Shuttle. It is a gift to the young people of New Hampshire from the amateur radio operators of New England and Eastern Canada who attend the event.

The Planetarium staff are very excited at the prospect of having a radio station on-site they can exhibit and operate with which they can communicate directly with the ISS and other NASA facilities.

"We are delighted about this exciting partnership," noted Planetarium Executive Director Jeanne Gerulskis. "Our goal is to educate and inspire. What a perfect medium amateur radio is to accomplish this. Teaching about radio waves and frequencies will come alive when we use the amateur radio station at the Christa McAuliffe Planetarium."

"We look forward to calling up some New England astronauts on the space shuttle and International Space Station in the near future," Gerulskis added. "Just imagine how young people's dreams will come alive when they get to talk with real live astronauts orbiting in space. And think about young people learning how radio waves can be sent around the Earth to reach their peers in Australia or Singapore: this partnership may engender a whole new generation of amateur radio operators!"

A prominent location in the Planetarium has been allocated for the amateur station adjacent to the Gift Shop. It is located just outside the entrance to the Theatre which is the focal point of the Planetarium. This is where visitors wait to enter the Theatre.

The Contoocook Valley Radio Club (CVRC) has enthusiastically agreed to work with NEAR-Fest and assist Planetarium staff

members in becoming licensed and proficient in the use of the equipment. Towards that goal licensing classes will be held at the Planetarium starting on Tuesday, February 5th 2008. Six staff members have already enrolled and it is expected that two more will do likewise by the time classes begin.

CVRC President John Moore, N1FOJ, commented: "The Contoocook Valley Radio Club is honored to be chosen as the Sponsoring Club! Our Club members are looking forward with great excitement to partnering with NEARFest and The Planetarium in the installation and operation of the new amateur radio station!"

N1FOJ is also the lead instructor and anticipates that the candidates will be well prepared to sit for their Technician examinations at their Club hamfest on March 30th 2008 at Henniker NH.

It is anticipated that the Station will be fully operational by April. The Dedication Ceremony is tentatively scheduled for Friday May 2nd 2008.

MEDIA CONTACTS:
 Michael Crestohl W1RC
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World Wide Web pages:
 New England Amateur Radio Festival:
<http://www.near-fest.com>

Contoocook Valley Radio Club:
<http://www.k1bke.org>

Christa McAuliffe Planetarium:
<http://www.starhop.com>

VE Team 2007 In Review

The MARA/Harvard Repeater Association Volunteer Exam Team held 9 exam sessions in 2007. Two VEs made it to all 9 sessions! Thanks to K1JHC and KK1X for such great efforts.

We served a total of 41 candidates, signing 11 new Technicians, 17 General upgrades, and 2 Extra upgrades.

The VEs who helped in 2007 with session counts and total number of candidates served are:

K1JHC	9	41
K1YTS	6	28
KD1SM	8	37
KD1YH	8	40
KK1X	9	41
KT1I	2	11
N1HVA	2	16
N1MGO	6	29
W1DF	1	4
WA1FIA	1	3
WA1RHP	6	26

Thanks to all of the Volunteer Examiners for their support of these sessions.

-Ralph KD1SM
 VE Team Coordinator

Contesting Chatter

de Gordon
N1MGO



March 2008

Contests coming up in March

1- 2 Sat 0000 - Sun 2400
ARRL International DX Contest - SSB

8- 9 Sat 1000 - Sun 1000
RSGB Commonwealth Contest - CW

9 Sun 0000 - 0400
North American Sprint Contest - RTTY

15 Sat 0001 - 2359
10-10 International Mobile QSO Party - All

15-16 Sat 1200 - Sun 1200
DARC HF-SSTV Contest - SSTV

22-24 Sat 0200 - Mon 0200
BARTG Spring RTTY Contest - RTTY

29-30 Sat 0000 - Sun 2359
CQ WW WPX Contest - SSB

Contests coming up in April

5- 6 Sat 1500 - Sun 1500
SP DX Contest - CW/SSB

5- 6 Sat 1600 - Sun 1600
EA RTTY Contest - RTTY

5- 6 Sat 1800 - Sun 1800
QCWA QSO Party - All

12-13 Sat 0700 - Sun 1300
Japan International DX Contest - CW

19 Sat 0000 - 2400
TARA Skirmish Digital Prefix Contest - Digi

26-27 Sat 1200 - Sun 1200
SP DX RTTY Contest - RTTY

The above contests are some of the big ones of the winter/spring contest season.

There are many other contests also going on during March and April, including many State qso parties. Ontario, Michigan, Florida, Nebraska and Georgia are just some of the states!

For more contests and information, with links to the rules see:
<http://www.sk3bg.se/contest/> or
<http://www.hornucopia.com/contestcal/contestcal.html>

KT1I and I will be setting up for multioperator from my house for the North American QSO Party, RTTY contest, this will be a great time to try your hand at RTTY contesting!

Now for the results,

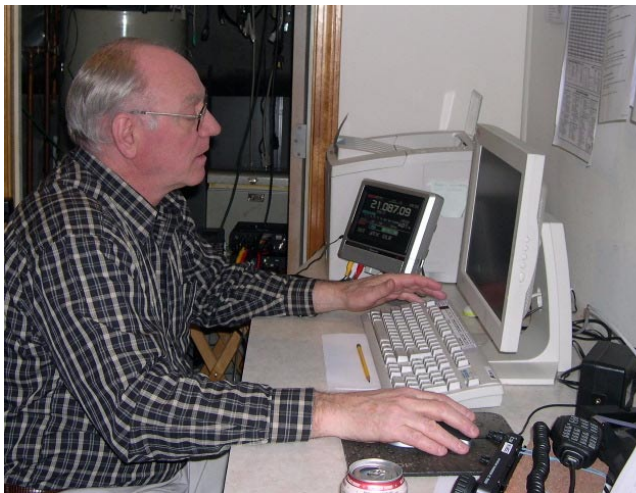
Bambi runs again!! just not from the hunting camp in VT, way too much snow and cold, did not want to lug all the equipment in on snowshoes! The operators, N1MGO, KT1I, KB1LRL and N1UZ were supported by KB1JXJ, Pauline, who kept us fed and watered, with plenty of home cooked meals and fresh coffee! Propagation was BAD and even worse on 40mtrs, which is usually one of my better bands. Lots of noise and fading.

The equipment and software (Writelog 10.66a) worked great! We used an IC-756Pro2 and IC-7000 feeding a bunch of wire dipoles in the trees, about 30 to 45 feet up. ICE band filters worked great to keep inter station interference to a minimum. We chased a VT station all over the band on 80mtr, never did catch him, and never even heard HI, NV and ND on any band. This was lots of fun and we are looking forward to doing it all again from VT in July.

Gordon N1MGO, Charlie KT1I, Ray KB1LRL, Bill N1UZ and Pauline KB1JXJ.



Above: Charlie KT1I and Ray KB1LRL
Below: Charlie KT1I operating
photos courtesy KB1JXJ



Above: Gordon N1MGO operating
Below: Bill N1UZ at the remote display
photos courtesy KB1JXJ



Note: The reason for the name Bambi is because the exchange for the NAQP contests is operators name, and with multiple operators we have found that sending different names just confuses the other stations when they work you on other bands, so we switched to the "Bambi" name because we

are normally operating from the hunting camp in Vermont for the NAQP contests!

Even with the bad band conditions we managed to work 625 contacts in 12 hours. We usually can work all states, but the propagation and luck was just not with us!

If you would like to participate in any of the upcoming contests, especially the RTTY or CW ones let me know. I run a software decoder for CW, as an assist because most of us can not copy code at 30 to 40 wpm like lots of the "Big Guns" are sending during a contest. I'm not setup for computer generated voice, so I don't do much with the voice contests, just a little hunting around for the nice DX or a new state on a band, but If you would like to operate during a ssb contest let me know. We can run low power (100 watts) or high power (500 watts), except the contests like NAQP that have a maximum power of 100 watts, with no high power class.

If you need help with log submission, or setup for a contest, I will try to help. Call me on the club repeater, or e-mail me, or stop by.

Gordon N1MGO

What Got Me Interested In Ham Radio - W1HFN

Christmas of 1958, Aberdeen, MD, I was 16. My parents bought me a crystal (1N34, IIRC) radio kit with a one stage PNP transistor audio amp to drive the headphones. The antenna consisted of 30 feet of #28 dropped out my second story bedroom. Ground was a convenient pipe on the baseboard. The very first thing I heard was Radio Moscow. Boy was that cool!

I mentioned it to a friend at school and he asked me if I had ever heard of ham radio. I said not so he invited me to his shack. So that is how I met Rick K3EBE, no longer licensed but at least still alive. His shack consisted of a door laying on two file cabinets supporting a Heath Mohawk RX and DX-100 TX. He turned it all on, let me tune the RX and I was hooked. He loaded up the DX-100 and we made a few QSOs. I was not only hooked but dead in the bottom of the boat.

The local electronic parts store provided a copy of the 1959 ARRL Novice License Manual and so I went to work. The Morse Code should not be too hard, I thought; I will just get that from our encyclopedia. Little did I realize that memorizing the code as dot-dash visually was a long way from learning it audibly, as dit-dah. So at the suggestion of K3EBE, the encyclopedia was replaced with an Ameco code course borrowed from W3LEY (SK) on 18 78RPM records (don't forget, this is 1959). The records started out with the alphabet and numbers at a crawl then slowly worked up to 22WPM with a combination of straight text and 5-letter alpha/numeric groups. Great fun; listening to those old 78s gave me training for noisy and scratchy CW QSOs later on.

I finally got the License Manual memorized, a pretty good grip on 7 WPM (a little safety factor for the 5 WPM test), and had the novice exam administered by Bernie W3PRC (SK). Of course in 1959 it took 4 months for the FCC to finally issue KN3IWW, so in June of 1959 I was a ham. Kilowatt November 3 India Whiskey Whiskey, not a bad call, I thought.

A year later I had the General License manual under my belt and I thought a good handle on 15 WPM, so another Elmer, Harry W3GZK (also SK, notice a pattern

here?) drove me to the FCC office at the Customs House in Baltimore for the exam.

Many of the older hams in the club can relate their stories of the FCC exam offices back before VEs. All those stories are true. Large oak table with 6/8 chairs, sets of headphones, pads and pencils greeted the terrified examinees. No less daunting were the FCC guys, white shirts, ties and with a smoldering cigar clenched in his teeth. "Have a seat kid, and when I start the code tape, you start copying. Get 65 consecutive characters in a row correct and you pass the copy test". So I sat frozen for the first 10 seconds or so trying to remember ANY Morse characters at all, and eventually I got going.

I will never forget the copy, it had to do with some space cadet named Timmy flying his rocket ship to the moon. The examiner listened to me send on the J-38 straight key for 30 seconds or so and I was done with the hard part. The theory test was much easier, as the FCC guy was smoking his cigar and doing the Baltimore Sun crossword puzzle. Passed that, dropped the "N" and became K3IWW.

W1HFN was acquired after moving to MA in 1969 and upon trying to renew K3IWW, being asked by the FCC if I would like a re-issued W1 call.

My real Elmer was Paul K3IEW. He took it upon himself to show me how to build things, string antennas and put up towers. I spent more time in his shack in Aberdeen than at my own home. He moved back to VA, got his old call back, W4EKO and dropped out of sight. I assume he is an SK as well.

So there you have it. June of 2009 I will celebrate 50 years as a ham. A great hobby,

you make great friends and learn a lot about geography and other cultures.

73
de W1HFN

Ed: Please share your story in the W1/GaZette. What got you started? Why were you interested? Who helped to motivate you?

Next month: W1DF's story.

Public Service Season Starts

With the end of the cold weather (we hope!) comes the start of canoe races, foot races, and bike races. Many of these events rely on Amateur Radio communications to provide event logistical support, dispatch medical assistance when necessary, and keep the event organizers connected with the personnel performing critical event functions.

Many events are announced on the PSLIST: <http://purl.org/hamradio/publicservice/nediv>

Volunteering for these events is a major way that Amateur Radio demonstrates to the Public the value that we provide and to justify the valuable spectrum space that has been granted to us by the FCC.

MARA members are especially requested for the following events coming up in April:

19th - Townsend; Squannacook Canoe Race; see Gary K1YTS for details and to volunteer

21st - Hopkinton to Boson; Boston Marathon; see Paul W1SEX to volunteer

27th - Groton; Groton Road Race; see Ralph KD1SM for details and to volunteer



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