

# MARA W1⚡GaZette



May 2008

MONTACHUSETT AMATEUR RADIO ASSOCIATION

Vol 50 No. 9

## Next Meeting

**Wednesday, May 14  
7:30PM  
Lunenburg Public Library**

## QSL Card Sort

A first in a long time for MARA, during the May meeting we will sort QSL cards for the W1 incoming QSL bureau.

The incoming QSL bureau receives QSL cards from hams in foreign countries addressed to hams with US call signs. These cards initially arrive at ARRL in Newington CT. At Newington they are sorted according to the digit in the call sign; all '1' cards come to the W1 Bureau, regardless of where the recipient may live.

When the W1 Bureau receives the cards the next task is to sort them by the first letter of the call suffix -- the first letter after the digit. This is the job that MARA will be performing. We will create 27 groups of cards; those addressed to x1A..., x1B..., x1C..., and those cards not meant for the '1' call area. The sorted cards will then be sent back to the W1 Bureau for redistribution to each of the 26 "letter sorters". These 26 individuals will then mail the cards to the hams who have previously sent postage money to the Bureau to receive their cards.

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## Contributors To This Issue:

WB1EWS, W1HFN, W1DF,  
KT1I, KB1LRL

The QSL sort is a fun opportunity to see a great variety of foreign QSL cards. If you find any cards addressed to you, you may take them with you and save the postage that the letter sorter would have spent to send them to you.

If you have outgoing cards to be sent, bring them with a QST mailing label to verify you are an ARRL member. The Bureau will accept outgoing cards without the usual fee from participants at this sort as a thank-you.



above: MARA members participated in the Pepperell NVARC QSL sort last October.

KD1SM photo

## 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/>

**Sunday, 18 May, Cambridge MA**  
Flea at MIT; third Sunday April-October

**22-24 August, Boxboro MA**  
ARRL New England Convention

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

## VE Team Report

The April MARA/Harvard Repeater Association VE session had no exam candidates pre-registered so the session was canceled. The next session is scheduled for May 28.

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

May 18 - Parker Classic Road Race

July 4-6 - Longsjo Classic Bicycle Race

July 26 - Memory Ride



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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Club Secretary: Pauline Carulli KB1JXJ  
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.



above: Les Peters N1SV talks about the fine art of QSLing during the April MARA meeting at the Chapel of All Saints in Leominster.

## Amateur Radio Clinic

Saturday May 17, 2008 from 9 AM to 2 PM  
Leominster Masonic Hall, 69 West St

Sponsored by WB1EWS and WA1RHP and the Masons of Wilder Lodge AF & AM

HF and VHF/UHF demonstrations

We will have test equipment and tools on hand and will be prepared to:

- install mobile rigs
- mount antennas on cars (you supply the antenna and car)
- check frequency and deviation
- perform minor repairs on rigs

The object of this exercise is to increase the number of local amateur operators who have usable mobile radio gear, and consequently the usage of our local repeaters.

Paul WB1EWS

## Attention All Foxhunters!

de Barry W1HFN

In honor of the CQ Magazine World-Wide Foxhunting Weekend (May 10th & 11th) and to hopefully foster a resurgence of the activity in the Central MA area, I have assembled a "foxbox".

It will be deployed within a 5-mile radius of a circle centered at N42° 28.102' W71° 40.430'. For those of you without GPS or mapping software, that is the intersection of Rtes 70 & 117 in Lancaster, MA.

The fox consists of a 50mw transmitter on the national fox hunt frequency of 146.565, there will be a 20 second voice ID every 3 minutes. This rig feeds a 6dB gain antenna. Testing with this antenna tied to my basement ceiling resulted in hearing it on my mobile rig over one mile away, so "in the clear" and at a decent height, it should be heard for quite some distance.

There will be the usual log in a plastic baggie, also finders can report their finds via my email; w1hfn@arrl.net, with a note detailing the message printed on the foxbox.

If there is sufficient interest in this fun aspect of ham radio, I will deploy the fox each weekend in a different location.

Please forward this notice to any persons or groups you think may be interested.

Good luck and happy hunting!

73,  
Barry - 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 are welcome to use this list for other announcements they believe are of interest to Club members.

## How I Got Started; W1DF

My first encounter with ham radio was in early 1961 as a 13 year old when I knocked at the door of a neighbor with a weird looking antenna (tri-band beam) on top of a metal pole. His name was Joe and his call was W1LRB. He showed me what was connected to the weird antenna and I instantly became enthralled with the idea of talking to folks around the world.

The 1958 sunspot cycle was still active and Joe talked endlessly about the effectiveness of 10 meters and the ability to "work the world." He offered to teach me about ham radio and he must have done a decent job because I was licensed as KN1VHS in December 1961.

I bought a used NC-88 with paper route money and we built a homebrew 40 watt 80/40 meter crystal controlled transmitter

together that I connected to a long wire. Back then, the Novice license lasted one year, so I traveled to the Customs House in Boston and sat for the General and passed in mid-1962.

From the beginning my prime interest was chasing DX, which was prompted in part because Joe worked for Raytheon on the project to fire missiles into the Kwajalein Atoll and we talked at length about that part of the world and job possibilities in Field Engineering. My preferred mode is CW and my family considers me a whiz at Geography Trivial Pursuit (thank you ham radio).

Radio took a hiatus during my university years (BSEE) but surfaced again with my assignment as a computer technician for NASA at the Ascension Island Manned Space Flight Network (MSFN) tracking station supporting the Apollo and Skylab programs. The site was equipped with S-Line gear and an 800 foot Vee antenna pointed toward the States. I requested the call ZD8JK and operated for three years on the other side of the pileup. Subsequent assignments were to VP9 (Bermuda), EA4 (Spain) and 5R8 (Madagascar) but without ham radio.

I returned to the States in 1974 and moved to Lunenburg in 1976 and set up a station with Kenwood Twins (T-599/R-599); Yaesu FL-2100B and tri-bander 70 feet up and started chasing DX. While overseas, Incentive Licensing was introduced, so additional trips to the Customs House were made to make Extra Class with its access to the CW bands.

I am now in Westminster with a Kenwood transceiver and Ameritron linear with a 40 foot tower with a new call sign. In 2000, my daughter Samantha caught the bug just

before starting high school and she requested and received K1VHS.

I drive by Joe's house (I don't know when he passed) each time I visit my mother in Marlboro. The beam is gone but the metal pole is still attached, so I cannot help but recall a random knock at the door 46 years ago that resulted in both a hobby and a career path. Thanks again, ham radio!

Jim Kane W1DF

*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.*

*Next time: KB1LRL*

## Squannacook Canoe and Kayak Race - Townsend

Saturday, April 19 was a beautiful New England spring day. 10 radio operators from MARA and NVARC assisted with the 2008 Townsend Lions Squannacook Canoe and Kayak Race

MARA members Tom K1JHC, Gary K1YTS, Nancy KB1KEF, Ralph KD1SM, John KK1X, Charlie KT1I, and Barry W1HFN were joined by NVARC members Bob AB1CV and Stan KD1LE, plus Tom K1KAY.

*photos on next page*

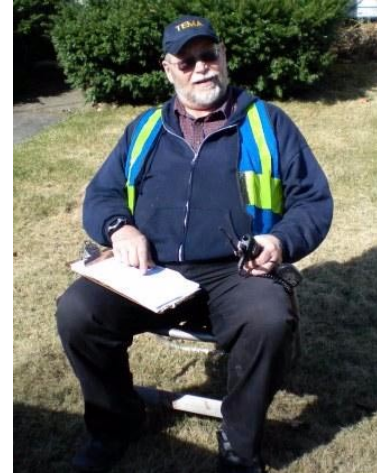




left: Gary K1YTS was the coordinator for the radio communications.

right: Tom K1KAY in position.

KD1YH photos

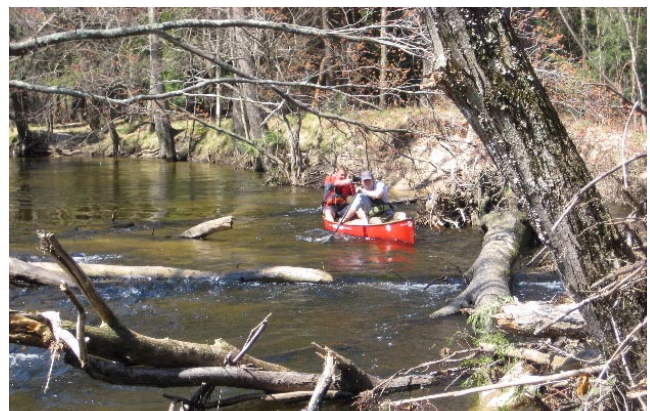


above: a canoe makes the portage at the first railroad trestle.  
W1HFN photo



above: another canoe approaches the portage at the first railroad trestle.  
W1HFN photo

below: Tom K1JHC in position at the Route 13 bridge.  
KD1SM photo



below: a canoe approaches one of many fallen trees across the river.  
KD1SM photo

## Geocaching vs Foxhunting

de Charlie Cayen KT1I

Well, after a long absence, foxhunting is returning to the MARA area. Barry Fox, W1HFN has been kind enough to build a new foxbox and plans to deploy it for the National Foxhunting Weekend May 10 and 11.

As some of you may remember, I was one of the fox hunters a while back having found the KD1SM/KD1LE foxbox several times. Also, as some of you may know, I have become active in Geocaching in the last couple of years. For some of you that may not know, Geocaching is a worldwide sport of finding things using a GPS with the help of [www.geocaching.com](http://www.geocaching.com) which really facilitates and monitors the sport. In fact, there are a lot of hams out there geocaching, many of them use their callsigns as their screen name as I do.

Both activities involve finding or hiding something, using specialized equipment, experience, cunning and intuition. Some days "The Force is With You" and other days not.

In a foxhunt, the objective is to find a hidden transmitter, which may transmit continuously or at intervals. From a distance some sort of directional antenna will usually help determine the direction of the fox. By taking two or more readings from different locations and using a map and compass, a general area where the fox is hidden can usually be determined. Arriving closer in, the directional approach still works but the signal strength is possibly more important. When getting very close, some way to cut down on the signal strength is useful. In the end, when the signal is extremely strong the eyes take over looking for something that the hider has hidden well.

Geocaching uses a handheld GPS which can run from \$80 to several hundred dollars. From my experience, if you get hooked seriously, a mid level GPS is worth the extra money. From the geocaching website it is possible to obtain the GPS coordinates of caches in the area that you might want to hunt as well as a description of each cache. There are several types of cache single stage, multi stage, and puzzle caches which involve figuring out some sort of puzzle to come up with the coordinates.

Here are the similarities and, differences between the two sports.

1. Both foxhunting and geocaching involve finding your way from a starting point to the hiding location. Although the indication is a straight line, getting there involves finding an acceptable route. Things like private property, rivers, cliffs, etc all make things more interesting.
2. With a foxhunt, the signal from the fox may be reflected from hills or buildings giving false directional information. Signal strength can also be deceiving if there is something blocking the signal from the fox. With a GPS, tree cover can cause the accuracy level of the GPS to degrade or it may cause the GPS to lose the signal completely. In a city tall buildings can cause the same problem as the GPS needs to "see" the satellites to operate. Here is where a more expensive GPS usually makes all the difference.
3. Hunting close in, foxhunting may have the advantage. Within 100 feet of the fox, the signal is usually so strong that the problem is how to knock it down enough so that the S meter is still useful. Taking off the antenna or using a really deaf sniffer is one way to do it. Hunting a cache with a GPS, there may be signal "bounce" where



both the direction and distance become erratic. Also, the hider may have incorrectly reported the coordinates of the cache. With both sports moving around and determining where most indications are pointing will often determine the best possible location. Again, beating the bushes and looking into likely hiding places is the final step.

4. In general looking for a cache with a GPS involves less bulky hardware than foxhunting. Going through the brush with a directional antenna is not fun.

5. Geocaching can be done anywhere, anytime. As long as you have available a computer with an internet connection, it's easy to see possible caches in the area. I would think that there are fewer chances to find a fox to hunt.

In any case, it's an opportunity to test your skills, get some exercise, and enjoy nature. See you in the woods!

## Groton Road Race - April 27

The week of warm sunny weather leading up to the Sunday of the Groton Road Race did not last, to the chagrin of the 40 radio operators who helped with communications for the 17th annual Groton Road Race.

MARA members Tom K1JHC, Gary K1YTS, Nancy KB1KEF, Ray KB1LRL, Ralph KD1SM, John KK1X, Charlie KT1I, and Tom WA1RHP, joined hams from NVARC, BARS, and WECT to provide essential radio communications.

Groton Police Lieutenant Cathi Welch, Officer In Charge for the race, described the Hams as critical to maintaining the safety of this event.

## Field Day is Coming to Westminster!

de Ray Lajoie KB1LRL

Field Day is going to be here sooner than you think. We are deploying operations at Academy Hill in Westminster roughly Friday afternoon, and begin operating on Saturday afternoon, June 28 and going 24 hours into Sunday afternoon. Anyone and everyone is invited to attend.

This event is usually thought of as a contest, but actually is a demonstration in emergency communication under less than ideal circumstances. This is also an opportunity to promote amateur radio to people and hopefully to bring more people into the hobby.

What we are hoping to do this year is to run three modes, CW, SSB, RTTY, we are going to have a GOTA station so visitors can operate and make contacts under supervision. We are hoping to have a VHF/UHF station as well. This does and will, require the services of volunteers who can play a part in the success in this event. We have had a group of people who on a year to year basis, have worked hard in making Field day happen, and they are to be commended

What we are looking for this year are operators who can operate during the day or night, or both. If you are interested and can participate, e-mail me at kb1lrl@arrl.net , give me the day, and time and preference of mode, that way we can plan out stations and category. I am also looking for somebody (two or three would be ideal) who has a video camera who can document and record the setup and operation. I would like to try putting together a short documentary to use



in the local access stations and for future promotion. And, of course, we need people who will be there to set up and take down.

As you can see, a lot goes into this event. Bottom line is that we demonstrate well, exceed last years results and just plain HAVE FUN! If you can be there, let me know via e-mail, and thank you.

Hope to see you there! 73's Ray

## Public Service List

### PSLIST

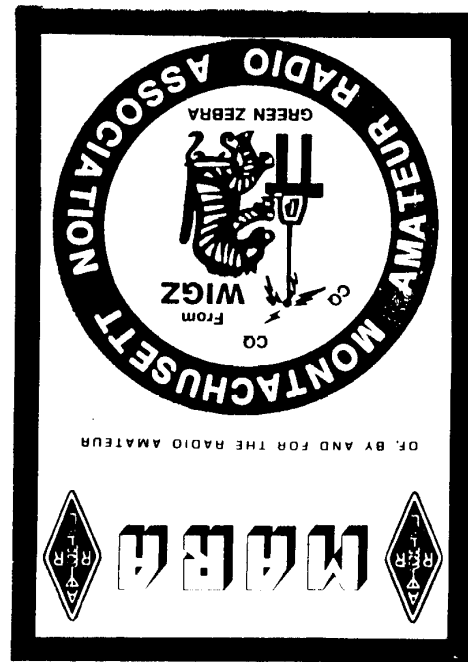
Listing public events at which Amateur Radio communications is providing a public service and for which additional volunteers from the Amateur Community are needed and welcome. Please contact the person listed to identify how you may serve and what equipment you may need to bring.

The most up-to-date copy of this list is maintained as

<http://purl.org/hamradio/publicservice/nediv>

Date	Location	Event	Contact	Tel/Email
May 4	Boston MA	Walk for Hunger	Eric KA1NCF	w4h@nsradio.org
May 17	Westford MA	Apple Blossom Parade	Terry KA8SCP	ka8scp@arrl.net
May 18	Devens MA	Parker Classic Road Race	Stan KD1LE	
May 24	Hadley MA	Hadley Road Race	Richard KD1XP	
Jun 8	Boston MA	Bikes Not Bombs Bike Ride	Bob WA1IDA	wa1ida@arrl.net
Jul 4	Chelmsford MA	Parade and Road Race	Darrel K1EJ	k1ej@arrl.net
Jul 4	E.Longmeadow MA	East Longmeadow Parade	Eric N1QKO	n1qko@arrl.net
Jul 4	Princeton MA	Longsjo Classic Road Race	Ralph KD1SM	kd1sm@arrl.net
Jul 5	Fitchburg MA	Longsjo Classic Circuit Race	Ralph KD1SM	kd1sm@arrl.net
Jul 6	Fitchburg MA	Longsjo Classic Criterium	Ralph KD1SM	kd1sm@arrl.net
Jul 12	Hanover NH	Prouty Bike Ride and Walk	Rex AA1KL	rexgcarr@wildblue.net
Jul 12	Woburn MA	New England Classic Tour	Mike K1LJN	k1ljn@arrl.net
Jul 13	Durham NH	New England Classic Tour	Mike K1LJN	k1ljn@arrl.net
Jul 14	Biddeford ME	New England Classic Tour	Mike K1LJN	k1ljn@arrl.net

May 2008



**Montachusett Amateur Radio Association**  
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