

MARA W1/GaZette



November 2008

MONTACHUSETT AMATEUR RADIO ASSOCIATION

Vol 51 No. 3

Next Meeting

Wednesday, 12 November
7:30PM
Lunenburg Public Library

“Members’ Show and Tell”

Please join us in the Wallace Community Room of the Lunenburg Public Library at 1930 hours on 12 November.

President’s Corner

It's sad to see this summer slip by into another cold nasty winter. Obviously the economy is going to determine what kind of winter we are going to have this year, not the weather. This fall will also bring on a change in our political structure as well. A lot of people are going to be nervous this season as rightfully so. Ham radio offers us a good distraction from it all, to visit that faraway land via the airwaves, to warm yourselves by the gentile glow of your amplifier, to catch up on that project that has been hanging over your head. (I definitely have a few of those!) The next thing you know, spring is back!

We are starting to get into the winter with some good club stuff. November's meeting is going to feature a show and tell. Bring in

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Contributors To This Issue:

KB1LRL, KT1I, K1JHC, AA2T,
NZ1D, W1HFN

your unusual, your old, your custom-made item and tell us about it. We haven't had one in a long time so this should be fun. December's meeting is going to be at the Bootlegger Restaurant for our Christmas par-tay, which is a lot of good food and fun. The first Sunday in December. Mark it down. I also want to thank those who participated in the NVARC card sort. We had a good time meeting other hams and looking at those cards from far away lands. I even had a chuckle when I was looking at cards that are in the system for eleven years. But, that's the nature in QSL cards. We are going to have ours in May.

If anybody has anything of interest to the club and wants to put it in our newsletter, just write it up and Ralph KD1SM will be happy to find a spot for it. I actually have a couple of articles this month but I encourage more of you to send something in. It does not have to be club only, just amateur radio. Have fun.

73's Ray KB1LRL

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/>

14 February 2009, Marlboro
Algonquin ARC Hamfest

29 March 2008, Framingham
Framingham ARC Hamfest

Additional events are listed on
<http://web.mit.edu/w1gsl/Public/ne-fleas>

Intro to Amateur Radio Class

de Jerry AA2T

Jerry Rogich AA2T will be presenting an introduction to Amateur Radio at Leominster OEM on Thursday, 13 November, at 7pm. Attendees do not have to be members of Leominster OEM to attend.

Old Timers' Lunch

de Tom K1JHC

The Old Timers held their monthly meeting at Bickfords Restaurant on Wednesday October 1. Those present were Gary K1YTS, Charlie KT1I, Roy W1OOY, Al KA1AKD, Howard W1TQB, and Tom K1JHC. Energy saving opportunities took up most of the discussion.. Please join with us on the first Wednesday of each month at 12:30.



DICK WILBORG W1ZC
JOHN ROSE WW1Z

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Tell them you saw it in the W1/GaZette

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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.

NEAR-Fest IV

de Charlie KT1I

October 10 and 11 was the Fall NEAR-Fest at Deerfield fairgrounds in Deerfield, NH. MARA was well represented with Gary K1YTS, Nancy KB1KEF, Bill N1UZ, Tom AB1GF, Ray KB1LRL, and myself setting up camp. We had a wonderful array of fleas to sell and had varying success at that. In all we came home with less weight than we arrived with. The weather was excellent, no one could complain. The crowd was a bit lighter than we expected and was probably caused by several factors including the economy and the fact that it was a three day holiday weekend. Unfortunately, none of us managed to come home with anything from the prize drawings.



[KT1I photo]

de Ray KB1LRL

Deerfield NH could not have been any more perfect weather wise! NEAR-Fest IV is now in the books with a bunch of goodies to sell to the masses. The "crew" consisted of Gary K1YTS, Charlie KT1I, Tom AB1GF, Bill N1UZ, and myself, and we had a load....and a load of fun.

The officials indicated that they beat May's results but I think the people were a little wary of what they spent their money on. Tom had his usual tower stuff and needless to say, he did not bring much of it back. Gary brought a lot of Bill Gormley's stuff and managed to do pretty good with it, as well as his other stuff. Bill brought some of his wood turnings and got a lot of ooohs and aaahs and rightfully so, they are nice. But the items he had to sell he did good on. I did....ok, I managed to spend more than I made this year. Oh well, I still had a lot of fun. Tom Charlie and myself listened to the Red Sox at night and enjoyed the sunny Saturday.

All in all we did good and enjoyed ourselves and each other's company. The next NEAR-Fest is May 1st and 2nd of 2009. I'm already making plans, I hope you do to.



Left: K1YTS

[K1LGQ photo]

Longsjo Thank You Lunch

de Ray KB1LRL

The volunteers were invited to a thank you lunch at the Outback Steakhouse in Leominster. John KK1X, Gary K1YTS, Tom K1JHC, and myself joined in and celebrated the success in the 2008 bike race. Ed Collier and

the staff gave everyone a little gift and had a t-shirt trivia game, a nice lunch, and a preview of next years event which is the 50th running of this event and it will be a national event. It is also running in conjunction with Fitchburg's Civic Days events, so the city is getting ready now for a very busy July 4th.

The last part of the lunch was a recap of any good and bad that may of occurred. There was a lot of good and some things need looking at. These things will be looked at at meetings to follow. They are starting a membership drive and if you want further information you can go to www.longsjo.com

I made the commitment on behalf of the Amateur radio clubs that we will be there to provide communications support as we have done in the past, and was met with applause. So, stay tuned. The event will be July 2-5 of 2009. We will be looking for people to help out providing radio comms for the event. Ralph KD1SM usually spearheads the organization and I'm sure he will have information as he receives it. I will share any that may come my way as well.

Thanks,
Ray KB1LRL



[KB1LRL photo]

How I Got Started

My brother talks to airplanes...
or how I got started in Amateur Radio

[continued from October W1/GaZette]

de Bill, NZ1D

I graduated from Ground Communications Equipment Repairman School at Scott AFB, Illinois, received my second stripe, and proceeded to my first assignment. As a "perk" for being first in my class, I got to choose my general area of assignment and I picked Iceland, Greenland or northeast US. I got Loring AFB in Limestone, Maine, "the land of eleven months of winter and one month of poor sledding," -- about as far "northeast" as you could get and still be "US".

Ten years had passed since I had shown my first interest in radio. Now, armed with a Certificate of Proficiency, a 1956 edition of the ARRL Amateur Radio Handbook, and a brand new Hallicrafters S-53A receiver, I was officially a communications technician in the Strategic Air Command's Eighth Air Force. But still no ham license. I really needed a mentor!

As an aside, the next time that you make an SSB QSO, consider that SAC's commander General Curtis Lemay was considered the father of HF SSB in the military. A crusty old WWII bomber pilot and an Amateur Radio operator himself, Lemay had literally browbeat the Air Force into adopting SSB as the primary means of long-haul HF communications. Its favor in ham radio soon followed.

At the base radio shop I met "Rusty" Armour. Not Dorothy's friend the Tin Man, nor a creaky old knight -- but Ed, K6MPJ. Ed was a few years older, married and lived in base housing, a small trailer park off the end of the main runway. He was active in the Amateur Public Service Corps, a member of several Maine nets and, the best thing, he had a DX-100 in his Oldsmobile Ninety-Eight. I now had an Elmer, as they later would come to be known. Through Ed I met several of the local "Down east" hams. I also experienced first hand what Amateur Radio public service meant when I helped set up a remote command post in the frozen wilds of New Brunswick near the site of a B-52 bomber crash.

We maintained our frozen vigil at the crash site for three days, until the last body was found and brought out. Excellent detailed accounts of this operation, including a photo of a skinny 19-year-old airman sitting behind the cluttered operating table, were provided by Major W. M. Wood, W1ECF, and published in the April 1957 issues of both QST and CQ magazines. My first public service event but still no ham license! But now I had a mentor.

After a stint helping with the Loring Amateur/MARS station (K1FCF/AA1FCF), Uncle Sam's call for "volunteers" cut short K6MPJ's mentoring. A few months later, after an intense background investigation, I found myself assigned to "spook" stations in Japan and Korea.

Overseas I lost contact with ham radio except for an occasional visit to the local MARS shack and the base hobby shop. I was assigned to the maintenance shop of a large "acquisition" or "listening" site containing about a hundred HF and VHF receivers, mostly Collins R390s. In the ops

room I was surrounded by an equal number of “dit operators” who strapped on headphones and copied 25-plus WPM Morse in six-hour shifts. It might as well have been Martian; it often was encoded, and it was in Chinese, Korean or Russian. Maybe that's why I pushed the code into the background. A major highlight of this tour occurred on October 4, 1957, but that's another story. A second assignment, nursing a roomful of BC-610's running RTTY at remote transmitter site on the beach provided lots of good transmitter experience.

“The job that is never started takes the longest to finish.” -- J.R.R. Tolkien

After returning to civilian life and landing a job at Sanders Associates in Nashua I finally found the motivation needed to seriously study for the FCC exam. Co-workers such as Don W1RCC (ex of Leominster), Bob W1NH, and Paul K1PNB provided the friendly cajoling. I spent hours hunched over the S-53A listening to the ham bands and rehearsed imaginary trips to the Custom House in Boston, mentally preparing to face the (gulp!) FCC examiners to take the General exam.

Finally, I remembered a proverb I had learned in Japan, *uma ni norumade, ushi ni nore* -- “ride an ox 'til you can ride a horse.” I enrolled in a Novice class sponsored by members of a Nashua area group. This provided the motivation to succeed (i.e., “peer pressure” -- there was no turning back). In the summer of '64 I received my first call signs: WN1CRE (Novice, a one-year, non-renewable license with limited HF CW privileges) and WA1CRE (Technician, which allowed VHF/UHF privileges, all modes).

My first transmitter was home brew, taken from the '56 ARRL Handbook, a 75-watt unit built from cannibalized TV's, feeding a home brew Windom. A Lafayette HE-45 feeding a Saturn 6 Mobileer, a strange-looking 3-ring halo built by HI-PAR in Lunenburg, provided six-meter AM from a '63 Chevy Nova convertible. “Looks like a space ship,” my XYL said. I joined AREC and enrolled in Townsend's Civil Defense as a RACES operator under K1PNB.

The HE-45 was soon joined by a Heath Benton Harbor “Lunchbox,” a Clegg 99'r and later, a trip to Evans Radio in Bow, NH, resulted in a Yaesu FT-620, providing a great leap forward to SSB. The Yaesu, feeding about 16 watts to a modest Cushcraft 5-element beam bought used from a Sanders co-worker, eventually worked all 50 states, 75 countries and over 1000 SMIRK numbers on six meters. The Yaesu is still in service, in FL. The beam is currently at K1YTS's QTH in Townsend and makes an annual appearance at MARA Field Day outings.

Ironically, my brother Roland, the tinkerer who started me thinking about electronics over sixty years ago, never did get a ham license. He never lost interest in tinkering; dabbling in the automobile repair service and operating a radio/TV repair shop as a sideline all his adult life. He was an early CB'er back when CB call signs started with 1W, etc. and after retiring from 22 years in the army owned a small antique radio museum in Texas. I never succeeded in getting him to take the exam, even after the VEC program got underway. I was planning to take another stab at it last fall, when some complications from old Viet Nam war wounds shut down his finals. I guess he needed an Elmer too.

A Cape Cod Historic Radio Vacation; My Visit To WCC

de Barry W1HFN

A little background; every year my wife and I and two other couples rent a house on Cape Cod in the town of Brewster. Ham radio pretty much takes a back seat on these vacations, however one year I drove the Subaru Forester with the Kenwood TS-50 HF mobile rig installed and visited the Marconi Transmitter Site in Wellfleet and worked a few stations from that historic spot. When this site was closed, operations moved to Chatham. Visit there: <http://www.stormfax.com/wireless.htm>

Quite by accident I spotted a map reference on my DeLorme Street Atlas program to "RCA Chatham Station." A bit of Googleing revealed that this was a very major HF CW site for trans-continental and then ship-to-shore communications. This is the site in Chatham to where Marconi's Wellfleet station moved. The station's call was WCC. Go to for a detailed history: <http://www.wjkane.com/wcchistory.html>

This year I stopped at the long-closed receiver site (the transmitters were located elsewhere, Forest Beach in South Chatham) and took some pics.



This is the dormitory where the bachelor CW operators lived. The ops referred to it as "the hotel."



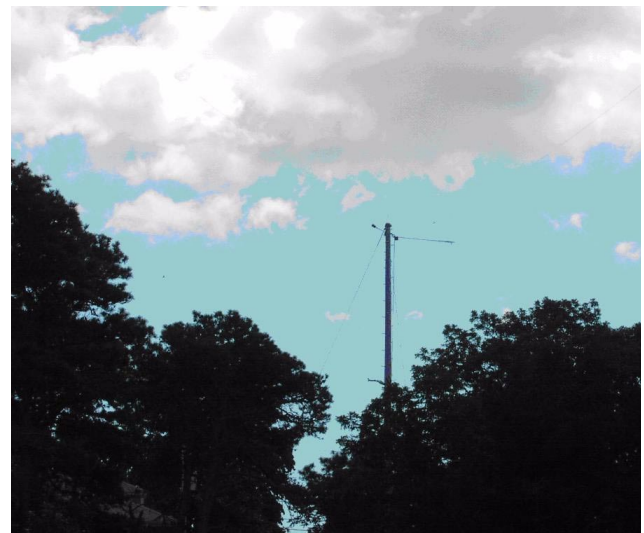
This building housed the numerous receivers and is where the ops did their thing. May be used occasionally by one of the local radio clubs for special events, although I could not get any confirmation from the ones I queried.



One of the still-standing 300-foot steel towers supporting one end of a rhombic. If you look carefully, you can see an osprey nesting on top.



A few of many utility poles holding up rhombics, dipoles, etc.



Another utility pole supporting an HF wire antenna.

Further along the road, is a tower with a large LP on top. That may be a private ham station or yet another vestige of WCC's past.

If you find yourself on the Cape near Chatham in the future, you might want to drive by and glimpse historic WCC. For the GPS minded, N41 42.200 W-69 58.748.

**Police Amateur Radio Team
(P.A.R.T.) Autopatch**

Member Guide to WB1GOF 146.955/442.45 Repeaters

(03-July-2003)

http://www.wb1gof.org/F_repeater/F_repeater/index.html

The repeaters (442.45/146.955) are located at the water tower at Prospect Hill in Westford.

On 146.955 Mhz. Set your CTCSS encoder and decoder (if desired) to 74.4 Hz.

On 442.45 Mhz. Set your CTCSS encoder and decoder (if desired) to 88.5 Hz.

Repeater ID is set at 9.5 minutes, use it as your guide for your identification, when you hear the repeater ID, then you should ID and your station and the WB1GOF will always meet the FCC requirement of 10 minutes between ID.

Press DTMF digit 9 for date and time in speech, 8 for 24-Hr Time only.

Autopatch Info:

PART has only one phone line at the site, so if the patch is in use on the 442.45 repeater you cannot use the line on 146.955 until the line becomes available. We have not interfaced busy detect logic to the controllers so it is possible to dial into another call, patches are infrequent but you should check for use on the other repeater if you can.

Users make autopatches by entering 3 digit "speed dial codes". Codes are identical on the two repeaters.

The patch operates in half duplex mode with the radio side as supervisory. This means you can interrupt them from the radio side but they cannot do that from the phone line side. If someone on the phone uses foul language just key-up, as soon as you begin to transmit the phone line is muted on the repeater. Send the # (pound) key to hang up the call.

The patch hang up code is # (pound sign).

Patch time-out timer is 6 minutes. Time-out warning message is 4 tones (2 up, 2 down).

Patch indicates that it is dialing by sending 4 beeps.

The following AutoPatch Macros have been entered:

- 910 Westford Police Business Line
- 911 Mass State Police Concord
- 912 Littleton Police Dept.
- 913 Acton Police Dept.
- 914 Lowell Police Dept.
- 915 Tynsboro Police Dept.
- 916 Groton Police Dept.
- 917 Chelmsford Police Dept.
- 918 Carlisle Police Dept.

November 2008



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