

# MARA W1GaZette



January 2009

MONTACHUSETT AMATEUR RADIO ASSOCIATION

Vol 51 No. 4

## Next Meeting

**Wednesday, January 14  
7:30PM**

### **Ralph Swick KD1SM “Preparing for First Principles”**

The FCC regulations that establish the Amateur Radio Service specify five principles as the basis and purpose of our hobby.

Ralph KD1SM, ARRL Western Massachusetts Assistant Section Manager, North Worcester County will discuss what each of us can do to help meet the first of these principles; recognition and enhancement of the value of the amateur service to the public as a voluntary noncommercial communication service, particularly with respect to providing emergency communications.

The first MARA meeting of 2009 is scheduled to be held in the Wallace Room of the Lunenburg Public Library, Massachusetts Ave (Route 2A), Lunenburg.

## President's Corner

It seems like just a short time ago we were enjoying a very nice gathering at the

## In This Issue...

Next Meeting .....	1
Watt's Happening .....	2
Nov. Old Timer's Lunch .....	3
October Meeting Report .....	4
November Meeting .....	4
December Meeting .....	6
December Ice Storm .....	8
Leominster RACES .....	9

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KB1LRL, KA1AKD, KB1JXJ, AA2T,  
W1HFN, KB1JZU, W1UD, KA1VV,  
KB1QWR

Bootlegger looking forward to the Holiday season...then all hell broke loose in a way that no one ever imagined. No, we did not endure the wrath that Katrina inflicted on the south, but this one was ours and we had to deal with it in our own New England fashion. The days that followed working with lots and lots of wire trying to restore cable to the homes made Christmas a distant thought, knowing we were in for a long battle, and it is. In the 11 towns our office services there were over 6500 drops down and a untold amount of miles of plant. The stories I heard from the customers were frustrating, sad, and also cheerful, grateful appreciative. This will be a event that will not be forgotten.

What does this lead up to? No, I am not a cable guy hero, but it made me wonder after observing my daughter and others throughout this ordeal was this simple question, what if this was far worse like a Katrina? Would the public be ready for such an event

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## 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, 14 February, Marlboro MA**  
Algonquin ARC Hamfest, Middle School

**Sunday, 15 February, Westboro MA**  
Antique Radios, Hyatt Regency

**Sunday, 29 March, Framingham MA**  
Framingham ARC Hamfest

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

## President's Corner

*continued from previous page*

and how would they deal with it? Ask yourself this question and give yourself an honest answer. Does it make you nervous or confident that you and your family would survive a catastrophic event. I can honestly say that my involvement in Amateur radio has certainly given me a leg up on preparing for it. It has given me a means of communication when nothing else was working.

I know after evaluating my disaster preparedness that I need to tweak some things. I know that this ice storm may never happen again. But, it could be an earthquake, a hurricane, etc next time. I will be better prepared. How about you? One good web site is [www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov) take a peek.

Until next time, I hope everyone has a safe and happy New Year. 73's

Ray KB1LRL

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DICK WILBORG  
JOHN ROSE

W1ZC  
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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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.

## Old Timers Lunch (Nov)

de Al KA1AKD

The Old Timers held their monthly meeting at Bickfords Restaurant on Wednesday November 5. Those present were Gary K1YTS, Charlie KT1I, Roy W1OOY, Al KA1AKD, Norm W1BYH, and Barry W1HFN. Conversation was heavy; seems like there were three discussions going on at the same time. Please join with us on the first Wednesday of each month at 12:30.

## October Meeting Report

08 October 2008

Lunenburg Public Library Wallace Room,  
Lunenburg MA.

Present: 24; Ray KB1LRL, Bill N1UZ, Gordon N1MGO, Pauline KB1JXJ, Charlie KT1I, Norm W1BYH, Barry W1HFN, David KB1OPS, Al KA1AKD, Paul KD1YH, Gary K1YTS, Tom K1JHC, John KB1QZE, Bette KB1PSP, Bill W1UD, Nancy KB1KEF, John KK1X, ED KB1LJJ, Dave KB1OKF, Cliff (guest), Claire KA1GMC, Dave WB1FCV, Ralph KD1SM, George N7QU.

7:30 - Meeting called to order by the President Ray - KB1LRL

Secretary Report - as written in newsletter.

Treasurer September

Opening Balance	\$998.82	
Income	\$17.00	Raffle
	\$130.00	Dues
	\$100.00	Donation

Balance                \$1245.82

7:34 Report accepted

Sholan Farm (Ray KB1LRL): Many events in which we can participate and the Farm is open to our participation.

Apple Blossom Festival in May is an option - a demonstration

Scarecrow festival next October -- Special event station

Barry W1HFN suggests kits in the \$40.00 range -- Build at home or a kit building day. In response to a show of hands Barry will research prices and discounts for clubs.

Repeater: It is being worked on

7:42 Q & A

Dave KB1OKF asks about equipment: Old vs. New, Buying vs. Building

7:45 Christmas Luncheon details given

November meeting will be a show and tell

8:00pm Trustee Charlie KT1I is reelected for 10 yr. term

8:01pm 10 minute break

8:15pm Bill W1UD --- Traffic Handling

8:42pm Adjourn

Respectfully Submitted  
Pauline R. Carulli KB1JXJ  
Secretary

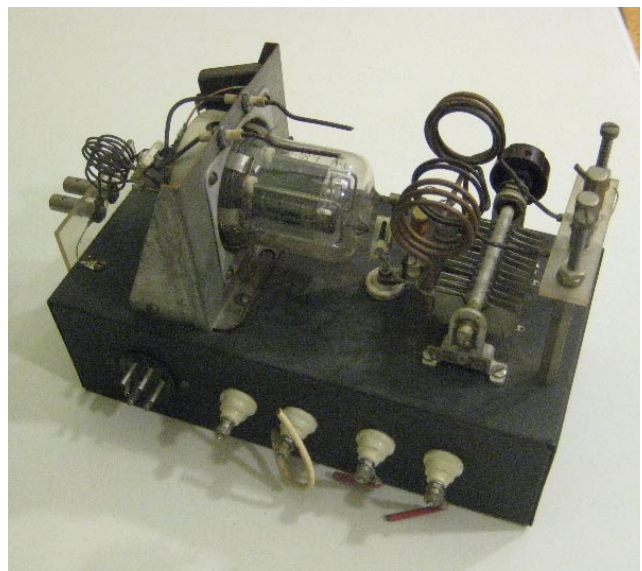
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## November Meeting

The November MARA meeting was a Member show and tell.



Above and below: Tom K1JHC shows a single-tube 829B receiver.





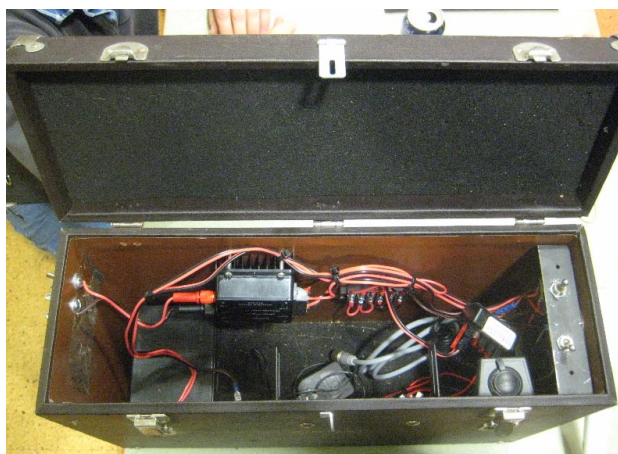


Above: Barry W1HFN shows his fox hunting gear, including the 'tape measure beam'.

Below: Al KA1AKD brought an Eico grid dip meter with coil set.



Right: Paul W1SEX showed a still-useful Eico 147 signal tracer recently purchased at NEAR-Fest.



Above: Ray KB1LRL displayed his emergency power case, containing a battery, 110v inverter, and controls.

Below: Bill N1UZ displayed his station-in-a-cabinet.





## December Meeting



Top row: Penny & Al KA1AKD, Tom K1JHC & Doris, Charlie KT1I  
 Second row: Pam & Bill N1UZ, Gordon N1MGO & Pauline KB1JXJ  
 Third row: Jill & Joe KB1RLC, Bill NZ1D, Walter K1CMF, Nancy KB1KEF & Gary K1YTS  
 Bottom row: Mary Ann & Paul N1QDX, Dave KB1OKF & Ruth





Top row: Norm W1BYH & Carolyn, Diane & Jerry WB1HIB  
Second row: Mark KB1QWR & Marie, Peg & John KK1X  
Third row: Tom WA1RHP & Verna N1ZRB, Paula & Barry W1HFN, Ed KB1LJJ  
Bottom row: Joseph N1QDZ, Ray KB1LRL, Paul KD1YH & Patty

## December Ice Storm

11 December 2200, an inch of ice brings down many trees and takes down power lines throughout the region. Parts of Ashby, Fitchburg, Townsend, and Luenburg are without power for 8 to 14 days.

What did you do during the recovery?

**Bob KB1JZU:** During the first day, checked the repeater and surveyed the damage in the area. Quickly concluded that the "by Monday" estimates were totally wrong. Packed up and spent the next week in CT with family monitoring the press releases. Returned a week later in the afternoon and power was restored at 6pm that evening. Until communication of status was the worst I have ever seen, nothing for the first 6-7 days. Lost all food and a fixed 40meter elevated radial. The pulleys' protected all wires in the woods after the downed tree limbs were removed.

**Jerry AA2T:** I was called up around 5am Friday morning for RACES activation. I lost both wire antennas at home, one car damaged. Used 12V inverter for lights/radios while at home on and off for 6 days w/o power. All 3 batteries on my Kenwood th-f6a got used, guess it was luck buying a spare and then forgetting I had one and bought another.

**Ray KB1LRL:** I spent much of the storm monitoring the scanners to get an idea of the extent of the damage and how the areas departments were dealing with it. I also had set up my station with emergency power just prior to the storm and was able to monitor the MARA repeater pretty much the whole time. During my time working to

help restore cable service, I was also monitoring the towns and repeater when I could.

**Bill W1UD:** I spent my time at the Leominster Emergency Operations Center answering emergency request telephone. I did some work on the hand held rigs the EOC people were using.

**Barry W1HFN:** I did listen to our repeater from time to time, nobody on. The Paxton machine was quite busy, but I did not check in. TA33c (below) & TA33f survived the storm OK, HF2V & Diamond did not.



**Doug KA1VV:** I manned the Westminster Elementary School Shelter for a night in my capacity as a Radio Operator in Westminster Emergency Management. Monitored local repeaters, but communicated on town radio channels.

**Mark KB1QWR:** We lost power for 5 days and had no emergency power so I had no way to monitor emergency radio.

**Ralph KD1SM:** Jeanine N1QIT and I were called at 0600 Friday by the Red Cross. We helped with in shelters in Winchendon, Worcester, and Fitchburg.

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## Leominster RACES Ice Storm Response

de Jerry AA2T

I was called up around 5am Friday morning for RACES activation. Charlie Coggins the director had trouble with the VHF MEMA Radio. So I was on 53.31 and 146.925 most of the next 5 days with Region 3 and MEMA. Contacted John N2YHK (ARES) to get 800Mhz state radios we staged for Leominster's leaders as well as for some surrounding towns. I received MEMA sitreps via RACES (nothing came through "normal" channels) as well as weather info from SKYWARN/NWS.

We were without internet for 2 days at the EOC due to Comcast issues and our backup DSL line being dead. Sprint and Verizon also both had cell outages however they were short enough that I did not need to pass much traffic. Most traffic was passed voice however things like sitreps were via pactor/winlink. Pactor/Winlink by the way work perfect even with poor propagation running just a 706mkiig and an 80M off center fed dipole.

I did pass several MARS pieces of EEI traffic on local status issues as well as did regular things like answering phones, helping dispatchers, running generator/pumping orders etc. We were close to doing an ARES callup for Southeast School and Skyview shelters especially since the communications to there was spotty via cell.

Just for reference:

Communication folks handled over 500 calls (and/or traffic in ham terms) and logged over 300 man-hours (including RACES/ARES/MARS).

Total for event was in the range of 1350 man-hours, which is 9-10 volunteers 24x7.

These numbers do not include any paid staff hours. There were a handful of people that actually lived there for 6 days (so much for a 72 hour pack) since there were no qualified backup volunteers in that area of responsibility.

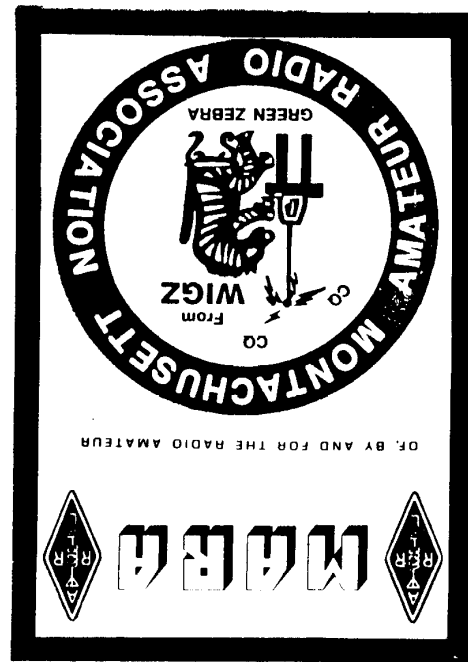
Leominster OEM also had become temporary staging area for all the surrounding towns for equipment, manpower, ambulances etc. So it was a much larger burden on folks.

Region 3 MEMA personnel were also using the facility for a while as well.

Lessons learned:

1. Read the ARES/RACES, ICS etc.. plans at the start of an event. It's amazing what much you forget when things are really happening.
2. Make sure there are backups for key people in the organization available and schedule them early in the planning process. Do not have people "self deploy" which did happen. Scheduling manpower is critical to surviving something this large.
3. Have good security in the communications and related areas. I had some important papers and HTs walk off when on break. We finally closed the doors to the communications area.
4. Have enough manpower for the unexpected. In our case it turning the local EOC into a regional one temporarily. If we would have lost cell service RACES/ARES would have been completely swamped trying to support that large of a regional operation.

January 2009



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