

# MARA W1⚡GaZette



February 2009

MONTACHUSETT AMATEUR RADIO ASSOCIATION

Vol 51 No. 5

## Next Meeting

**Wednesday, 11 February**  
**7:30PM**  
**Lunenburg Public Library**

**John Ruggiero N2YHK**  
**Section Emergency Coordinator**  
**ARRL Western Mass Section**  
**“Updates on WMA ARES”**

Our February meeting program will follow on from KD1SM's January presentation on preparing for emergency communications.

John Ruggiero N2YHK is the ARRL Western Massachusetts Section Emergency Coordinator. John is also active in the Worcester RACES (CERT) team. In his day job John is a radio technician for the Massachusetts State Police.

## President's Corner

Hi there, I don't know about you but I was tired of winter on New Years day! I think I speak for all, that we will not miss it when it leaves. We now enter February in hopes of some melting, higher temperatures and the thought of spring.

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## Contributors To This Issue:

KB1LRL, KB1LJJ, K1JHC, N1UZ,  
W1SEX, K1TWF

As spring gets closer and the meetings are back, it is time to start thinking about those projects we need to get started on. The club is going to have several going on. There is something for all members to get involved in. Some of the highlights will be the canoe race, the road race, the bike race, the Sholan Farms project, the repeater, FIELD DAY, and so on... I encourage all members, new and old to get involved with one, some, or all.

Last month, Ralph KD1SM spoke about ARES and RACES, their differences and our involvement with them. If you didn't attend, you missed out on a good one. February's talk will feature John Ruggiero N2YHK, his talk will be "Information and updates on the Western Mass. ARES program" which is a good follow up to Ralph's message.

With the ice storm now past and vivid in our memory, everyone is assessing what went right and wrong, and we are no excep-

*(continued on next page)*

## 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, 2000 local 28.410**  
"10/410" Net

**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*

tion. Although we hope we don't see another one like this, it could be something else, and involvement with cities and towns in our area should be looked at. As Ralph stated, "this is a golden opportunity for us". Cities and towns are losing money, services, able bodies due to the economy. There are areas that we can contribute with our communications to assist if such a need arises again, and we need to let them know we are available. The events that I described above is not only a practice for this, but it also lets people know what we are capable of, and that we are here and NOT going away anytime soon.

Till the next time 73's Ray KB1LRL

## New Members

Welcome to new MARA members:

John Santosuosso KB1QZE (October)

Joe Gordon KB1RLC (November).



**BELTRONICS, INC.**

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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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### 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.

## January Meeting Report

de Ralph KD1SM

*Note: Pauline KB1JXJ was unable to attend and asked Ralph to take these notes.*

The January MARA monthly meeting was called to order at 1930 on Wednesday, 13 January by Ray KB1LRL.

Present: Ray KB1LRL, Gordon N1MGO, Barry W1HFN, Charlie KT1I, Ralph KD1SM, Ed KB1LJJ, Bob KB1JZU, Joe KB1RLC, Al KA1AKD, Gary K1YTS, Dave KB1OPS, Ian W1GMC, John KB1QZE, Mark KB1QWR, and Mikey.

Treasurer's Report (N1MGO): starting balance: \$1495.02. Income: raffle \$28.00, AA1BL estate proceeds \$178, dues \$50. Expenses: Bootleggers (holiday party) \$100, PO Box 95 annual fee \$86. Ending balance: \$1557.02.

Technical Committee (K1YTS): Gary tried to get together with Paul KD1YH before Christmas to work on the club's repeater.

President's Report (KB1LRL): At a recent meeting the Board considered proposing a donation to the Lunenburg Library in the amount of \$150. Gary K1YTS noted that this may need to be done in a special way as most donations end up in the town general fund. Discussion was tabled until the next Club meeting in order to ask the Library trustees how best to send a donation.

Barry W1HFN brought documentation for two CW QRP kits. One kit, the SW+ from Small Wonder Labs (K1SWL) is a super heterodyne design. The other is the DCxxA

direction conversion series from KD1JV. Each kit is in the \$50 range.

Ray updated those present on the discussions with Sholan Farms. A Special Event station is planned for October 11-12. Ray is working on a special event QSL card. The plan is to use W1GZ rather than a special event 1x1 call. Ray is also discussing with Sholan Farms a demonstration at the Apple Blossom Festival in May.

Field Day - Ray KB1LRL noted that it is not too early to start thinking about Field Day. The plan is to use Academy Hill in Westminster again. Suggestions for projects related to Field Day are welcome.

Membership Drive - Ed KB1LJJ is appointed as Membership Chair. Ed asks for an old Club membership roster so he can contact former Club members. Gordon N1MGO provided a recent roster.

Benevolent - Tom K1JHC slipped on ice and broke his ankle. He's been instructed not to walk on it for at least 3 weeks.

DXing - Bob KB1JZU and Mark KB1QWR both worked the TS7C Dxpediton in Tunisia.

## New 10 Meter Net

de Ed KB1LJJ

We have a new 10 meter net 8PM - 10 PM Wednesdays on 28.410. This is a non-directed net with purpose of providing a place to come and learn about our hobby. We want everybody to check in with us but more important new techs and generals who may have lot's of questions and may need or want help. I have chosen 10 meters so new techs can get their feet wet on HF.

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## Old Timers' Lunch

De Tom K1JHC

The Old Timers held their monthly meeting at Bickford's Restaurant on Wednesday January 7th. Those present were Norm W1BYH, ED KB1LJJ, Charlie KT1I, Al KA1AKD, and Tom K1JHC. The group welcomed Mark KB1QWR. The December ice storm was a major topic. Please join with us on the first Wednesday of each month at 12:30.

## N1UZ Winlink Station

de Bill N1UZ

Winlink 2000 (WL2K) is a worldwide system of volunteer resources supporting e-mail by radio, with noncommercial links to internet e-mail. These resources come from Amateur Radio, the Military Affiliate Radio Systems (MARS), and other volunteer organizations. The system provides valuable service to emergency communicators, and to licensed operators without access to the internet.

Central Massachusetts now has a Winlink node at my QTH in Hubbardston on 145.770 (simplex). The radio is a Kenwood 2 meter antenna with 7.3db gain located 35' up a telephone pole. This should give very good coverage to most of central Worcester County. Coverage should extend to the east to Rt 128.

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## NZ1D Gets A(nother) Mention in QST

de Tom K1JHC

I have known Bill NZ1D and am impressed with his love for genealogy, Six Meters and all things about the Civil War. He has provide us with a booklet on W1GZ and MARA.

In the November 2008 QST "Vintage Radio" column, John Dilks K2TQN had an article about a Home Brew Rig built by Clinton A Potter W1FPE. John asked if any reader could come up with information about the gentlemen. Well, true to his calling Bill NZ1D came up with a complete bio for which K2NQ thanked Bill in his column on page 97 of the February 2009 QST. The Bio is posted on John's web site <http://www.k2tqn.com>

Click on the Radio for John's article fro November 2008.

## Public Service Season Coming

The melting of the winter snows brings the start of numerous outdoor events that request Amateur Radio communications support.

April events include:

Townsend Canoe & Kayak Race - 18 April

Boston Marathon - 20 April

These and additional events are listed on <http://purl.org/hamradio/publicservice/nediv>

## How I Got Started in Amateur Radio

de Paul W1SEX

Why W1SEX? I still remember the very first time I heard about W2SEX. It was Field Day 1973 at the park in Pendleton, NY. There the Amateur Radio Association of the Tonawandas (ARATs) was setting up for the ARRL Field Day. I arrived about 18:00 on Friday, a warm summers evening and sunset about three hours away. I managed to find my way to the military surplus, olive drab wall tent. My primary interest was visiting the North Tonawanda Civil Defense Agency and inquires about volunteering. Outside the tent was a twenty four foot extension ladder with a stacked pair of 5 element Yagis for two meters and this odd looking clover leaf thing just under the beams. Inside was a gent by the name of Walt who had a really great call sign, K2VOX.

Inside was some neat equipment, a Regency HR-212 with a power supply and this very funny looking yellow box with a Civil Defense logo on it. To an uninitiated seventeen-year-old I thought the yellow box may have been a Geiger counter or something. "Not so" said Walt, as I was introduced to the Gonset Communicator, this one on six meters. Since then I've learned the yellow box was a long standing staple of almost every Civil Defense office in the country. Oh, the clover leaf antenna, a horizontally polarized antenna for six meters.

Walt was great and I learned much about ham radio that day. I even learned of this guy named Murphy. I heard his name a lot that weekend and I was told he was around all the time. Murphy must have been good

at hiding because I never saw the man. Murphy always managed to get into a lot of trouble during field day (or any other club activity for that matter). I remember at that field day this couple of old guys playing with a dipole antenna. It seemed that something called viswar was all amiss. Up and down, up and down that antenna went. By the sixth time that antenna came back down Dex, W2VCI and Ralph, W2RPO (sk) discovered that Murphy used some new fangled clothes line to support the darn thing. As the story goes, ole Murph should not have used clothes line with the wire that ran through the inside of it.

At most every Field Day there seemed to be the same old pink pop-up tent camper. I don't remember who it belonged to but it seemed to show up about every year. Inside the trailer was the coolest radio I'd ever seen. There upon the dining table were the two black perforated cover boxes. The face plate was a two tone gray with beautiful blue glowing dials and meters. The air was thick with the smell of radio dust and the warmth emanating from the incandescence of the glowing bottles inside. Drake twins, as classic then as they are now.

Of all the good times remembered and the wonderful people that have enriched my life the only regret I have is that I never did get my license while living in the Tonawandas. None the less, after the start of a great career, a wife, family and the financial wherewithal, I did get my ticket. I said often while a member of the ARATs that if the FCC were to drop the code I would be standing on their doorstep the next day waiting to take my test.

After eighteen years of waiting for the code requirement to go away I finally capitulated and sat my lazy butt down and learned the

Morse code. Just prior to Valentines Day in 1991 I took my Technician Class test and passed. On my code test, I missed a slant bar. By December of that year I upgraded to General and was having the time of my life with ham radio. Prior to the Advanced Class Vanity Call Sign Gate opening I passed my Advanced Class test.

Of all the new friends made and the good times had, one of my most fond memories is calling "CQ Field Day from Whiskey Two Sugar Easy X-ray." I cannot express in words the pride I have in holding a sister call to that of the club. Every time I use W1SEX it will remind me of all the good hams I have met and the great times we had.

Ham Radio Interests Public service is very high on my radio priority list. I am currently serving as the District Emergency Coordinator for Northern Worcester County. Through my Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES) activities I became acquainted with the Gardner Civil Defense Agency. After serving as the Radio Officer and then Deputy Director, I am now the full time Agency Director. The RACES program in the City of Gardner has been re-born through the FEMA/DHS Community Emergency Response Team program. Another favorite activity is providing communications for the medical operations on the finish line of the Boston Marathon. Lots of work and long hours on race day but very worth while. If you would like more information about the Marathon or are interested in volunteering just drop me a line at my e-mail address. On air interests include HF phone and RTTY. I also enjoy operating 6 Meter SSB and FM as well VHF and UHF simplex/repeaters.

Paul Topolski

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## ARRL New England Division Cabinet Meeting

de Ralph KD1SM

Twice a year the ARRL Board of Directors meets to discuss various League matters. Just prior to each meeting Tom Frenaye K1KI, New England Director, invites the Section Managers, Affiliated Club presidents, and other field appointees to a "cabinet meeting". The purpose of this meeting is to share ideas among the Sections and Clubs and provide Tom input from our respective constituencies.

I attended the New England Division cabinet meeting in Springfield on January 10 with 35 other section appointees and Club presidents from Connecticut, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine.

We had a lengthy discussion of ARES and the opportunities and challenges of groups, such as hospital emergency communications groups, becoming licensed Amateurs without experiencing all the aspects of the hobby. One suggestion from the floor was to see more support for ARES from ARRL along the lines of the GOTA program. There was a feeling that one Simulated Emergency Test per year was not sufficient.

Further discussion of the cost associated with the Emergency Communications continuing education courses ensued. Tom K1KI said that the courses were administered through a distance learning center and the fee was necessary in order to be able to use that resource.

Impromptu reports were heard from representatives of the Contest Advisory Committee, the VHF/UHF Advisory Committee, and the DX Advisory Committee. Each of these committees is discussing proposed rule changes.

Tom Frenaye reported new licensee statistics. There is an increase in new licensees from 2007 to 2008 in New England. However, other Divisions see a larger increase in growth, with the Northwest Division -- which is a similar size to the New England Division -- seeing more than twice the number of new licensees as New England.

Mike N1IW described an idea that grew from discussions on how to interest new licensees in the broad aspects of Amateur Radio. In a cooperative venture with 3 clubs (Nashua Area Radio Club, Billerica Amateur Radio Society, and the Westford Police Amateur Radio Team), a literature table is displayed at their Volunteer Exam sessions. Club information is displayed for the benefit of the new licensees.

Mike Raisbeck K1TWF, Vice Director, made the following meeting notes available at <http://ema.arrl.org/node/1539>

### Introductions

Names and callsigns

Discussion of the mechanics of the ARRL board meeting

Purpose of the cabinet meeting - information gathering

### Getting on the air

More emphasis this year on state QSO parties and other "low pressure" Get on the air (GOTA) activities

Triple play award is a success

Could some GOTA type program be set up to encourage ARES membership?

What motivates people to get licensed

Disconcerting number of people getting licenses with no intention of using them (W1YRC)

Many served agency professional getting licensed, but not getting on the year

Note apparent decline of manners and behavior

People don't seem to be interested in learning

Dxing is very concentrated with the low sunspot numbers, so tempers flaring ??

### **Emergency operations**

With more served agency professionals getting licensed, interesting questions arising about appropriate use of ham radio

In general, good faith and sensible activities are fine

League should engage with the broader question of the position of ham radio within the emergency services

Denis Dura, K2DCD, ARRL Emerg Coord, is trying to work us into things more at the Federal level

League is doing more coordination where events build up from local to regional scope

### **Coursework**

Cost of the EMCOMM course (\$45) - can it be reduced/eliminated? - base cost to the League is around \$25

FEMA Emcomm courses cover some, and are free. IS-700 is one.  
<http://training.fema.gov/IS/crslist.asp>

Should League fund these?

FEMA Regional Emergency Communications Coordination Working Group (RECCWG's) were set up by law in 2008 - the League needs to engage them.

Consider strengthening the League's hand in dealing with section emergency management groups

ARES database - complete version not needed, but something tracking appointees and leadership would be good

### **New hams**

Licensing served agency people (police, fire, hospital, etc.) is producing some number of new hams

New hams licensed in New England

2007 - 866 new hams

2008 - 1059 new hams

Despite the significant increase, NE is running behind most other ARRL divisions

28000 new hams nationally, a net of about 8000 over attrition

What are League membership retention stats?

VE sessions a very good contact point for new hams !

We should consider trying to attract technical innovators to the League, regardless of license status

### **Contesting**

EME contest - proposed changes to digital rules

VHF contests - proposed changes to rover rules to limit grid circling, add club competition



Remote station discussions still underway

Status of Kosovo still under discussion - at the moment, it doesn't meet DXCC criteria

CW skimmer creating controversy over assisted vs. unassisted

### **FCC**

Riley Hollingsworth has retired, and not replaced - rumor is that it will happen in a few weeks

FCC not functioning well at the moment - bottleneck in the Chairman's office

Digital TV is sucking up large FCC resources

Note increase in issuance of experimental licenses

### **Pave Paws**

New England is in compliance now

Problems continue in California

Ethics and elected officials

Could we use a more formal code of conduct

The SM recall mechanism should be reviewed

Risk management in general

## **ARRL Board of Directors Considers Legislative Objectives for 2009**

excerpted from

*ARRL Bulletin 9 ARLB009*

*From ARRL Headquarters*

*Newington CT January 27, 2009*

*To all radio amateurs*

ARRL Board of Directors held its 2009 Annual Meeting on January 16-17 in Windsor, Connecticut, under the chairmanship of President Joel Harrison, W5ZN.

Among other topics, the Board voted to approve five legislative objectives for the 111th Congress:

Objective #1: The ARRL seeks legislation to extend the requirement for "reasonable accommodation" of Amateur Radio station antennas (a requirement that now applies to state and local regulations) to all forms of land use regulation.

Objective #2: The ARRL opposes legislation that encourages the deployment of RF technologies such as broadband over power line (BPL) systems unless adequate safeguards against interference to licensed radiocommunication services are included in the legislation.

Objective #3: The ARRL opposes legislation that would diminish the rights of federal licensees in favor of unlicensed emitters, especially unintentional emitters.

Objective #4: The ARRL seeks recognition of the unique resources, capabilities and expertise of the Amateur Radio Service in any legislation addressing communications issues related to emergencies, disasters, or homeland security.

Objective #5: The ARRL supports the complementary legislative objectives of other radiocommunication services, particularly the public safety and scientific services that require spectrum access and protection from interference for noncommercial purposes that benefit the public.



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