

# MARA W1⚡GaZette



March 2010

MONTACHUSETT AMATEUR RADIO ASSOCIATION

Vol 52 No. 6

## Next Meeting

**Wednesday, 10 March  
7:30PM  
Public Safety Building  
Lunenburg**

## Homebrew Show & Tell

The March meeting program will be the time shifted version of the February program, as the February meeting was canceled due to the weather forecast. Bring whatever project you've been working on and tell us about it!

Please remember to monitor 145.45 for last-minute (i.e. weather-related) event information.

## The President's Corner

de Ray KB1LRL

I'm sure you are feeling the same as I am in feeling spring is just around the corner, but winter isn't going down without a fight, everyone has at one point looked at their antennas and went "whew", or added it to the to do list of repairs. The weather the last week of February certainly tested (again) the limits of engineering and

## In This Issue...

Next Meeting .....	1
President's Corner .....	1
Watt's Happening .....	2
VE Team Report .....	3
Townsend Canoe Race .....	4
Groton Road Race .....	4
Public Service Opportunities ..	4
View from the Southern Trace ..	5
ARDF Update .....	6
Illinois RACES Program .....	7

## Contributors To This Issue:

KB1LRL, NZ1D

installation practices. The one thing I can say is if you think it's bad here, just look at the headlines and see what Haiti and now in Chile is going through. That will certainly test the limits of a lot of other things in many ways.

I don't want to seem like an alarmist or am I ready to build that underground hideaway shelter, I wonder if we are as prepared if something of that magnitude were to hit us. Ham radio as you know does help in giving us the knowledge of communicating under these conditions and how to sustain it over a period of time. The "go kits" that various agencies recommend us to have ready should give us a sense of what we need on a larger scale for more people for a longer amount of days. Cruising Ebay has revealed some of these survival kits packed in 5 gallon buckets and even the bucket serves as a toilet if needed. Now throw a GMRS, wind-up shortwave, and a handheld with a

*continued on page 3*

## 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, 11 April, Framingham MA**  
Framingham ARA Hamfest; Keefe Tech  
High School, 750 Winter Street

**Saturday, 17 April, Manchester NH**  
New Hampshire Antique Radio Club

**Sunday, 18 April, Cambridge MA**  
Flea at MIT; 3rd Sunday April - October

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

## VE Team Report

There were no candidates registered in  
advance of the January or February exam  
sessions so both sessions were canceled.

The MARA Volunteer Examiner team  
schedules monthly Amateur Radio license  
examination sessions on the 4th Wednesday  
of the month. The examinations are given  
in the Lunenburg Senior Center "Eagle  
House". The Eagle House is located behind  
the Lunenburg Public Library.

All classes of licenses are tested. Candi-  
dates must bring the \$15 examination fee  
and photo identification. If the examination  
is for an upgrade to an existing license, the  
original and a photocopy of the current  
license must also be brought.

Due to schedule conflicts, the March session  
is also canceled. The next session is  
scheduled for April 28. Contact Paul  
Upham KD1YH to pre-register. If no  
candidates pre-register the session is  
canceled.



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.

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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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### OFFICERS:

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

## President's Corner

*continued from page 1*

portable wire antenna in the pack. You really don't need much to start, and you can always elaborate to go a longer distance. I actually saved those 40 pound cat litter buckets and can use those for such a purpose, on top of saving the environment in not throwing them away.

Ok, so I got on a soapbox somewhat about this. What's it all lead up to? The Boy Scouts' motto is "Be Prepared" and there are many way of doing this. Preparing, practice, and education. I covered the prepare already, practice and education is gained by demonstrating the skills by educating the public, participating in public service, etc. As spring rolls around there are public service events that we can join in and practice our skills, as well as be visible and educate to others as to why we do this. The Boston Marathon is a good example. My first one was last year. The different ways I observed operators do to handle this long event made me learn some things, some of which I am applying this year. Operators young and old should give one of these a go and get some valuable "seat time", or at least to get out in the fresh air and possibly work on your tan! Doing something different to experiment is NOT illegal by no means. Again, something I learned last year to try out this year.

February's meeting was washed out by that "whopper" of a storm. March will be the show and tell, so bring those treasures to share with the others. Hopefully I will see you all at the meeting.

73's to all Ray KB1LRL

## 17 April; Townsend Canoe and Kayak Race

Charge up those batteries and blow the dust out of your handheld -- the public service event season is about to begin.

The first event for MARA is the Townsend Lion's Club Squannacook Canoe and Kayak Race on Saturday, April 17. We cover the course from the start at the Townsend VFW post in West Townsend to the finish in Harbor Pond at Townsend Harbor.

Gary K1YTS will appreciate hearing from you if you are available for 4 or 5 hours that Saturday.

## 25 April; Groton Road Race

The second event for our area is the Groton Road Race, to be held this year on Sunday, April 25. This is a big event sponsored by the Squannacook River Runners attracting over a thousand runners to the Town of Groton.

The Groton Police Department has said year after year that the Amateur Radio communications support is a vital part of the success of this event. The runners themselves often stop by to thank operators in person.

Dozens of public safety personnel come in from various services outside the Town and their radios do not all interoperate; filling this communications gap is the role of Amateur Radio. Amateur Radio operators are stationed at key points around the course to provide communications with the course marshals and the public safety officers positioned

nearby. The Officers In Charge have said repeatedly over the years that the Town would not be able to sanction this event if Amateur Radio volunteers were not involved.

Ralph KD1SM will be soliciting 36 to 40 volunteers again this year for the event. Some positions require only morning availability, some positions need to be manned all day, but the majority of volunteers are needed only in the afternoon.

This event has been a lot of fun for all involved and we could not ask for better exposure of Ham Radio to the community.

If you are interested in learning more, or if you want to volunteer, please contact Ralph <kd1sm@arrl.net>.

Additional information about the event itself may be found on the race Web site <http://www.grotonroadrace.com>

## Public Service Opportunities

The Squannacook Canoe and Kayak Race and the Groton Road Race are but two of the many events in our area that request Amateur Radio communications support. Please refer frequently to the New England Division Public Service List <http://purl.org/hamradio/publicservice/nediv> for other opportunities to put your FCC license and communication skills to the benefit of your neighbors.

Other upcoming events coordinated by MARA members include:

May 23 Parker Classic Race (Devens)

July 3-4 Longsjo Classic

July 24 Memory Ride

## View from the Southern Trace

de NZ1D/4

Florida: — Feb 2, Ground Hog Day. Dark, gloomy and wet. Rain drumming on the lanai's tin roof so loud that I need headphones to hear the HF rig. Not exactly the "sunshine" state but the water will perk up the straw-colored lawns left after last month's record-smashing two-week cold spell. Al Gore, where are you now? All in all, it's preferable to the nasty tornado of 2007.

What hath whiskey wrought? Interesting article by K1JHC in the September W1/GaZette, "The New England Museum of Wireless and Steam, Inc.," about the QCWA meeting at the museum. Tom tells us that Marconi used "monies from his wife, a member of the Jameson Whiskey family" to buy patents from Edison and others and erected a working transmitter site in 1903. Who knew? It seems that part of the wireless "distillation" process, and therefore of amateur radio, may have been "excited" with a little shot of Jameson.

I'm saddened to hear we lost Norm Lyons, W1LXE, in September. I didn't know Norm back in the day (I was only a year old when he got his license) but after he retired and returned to Fitchburg he gave me some insight into the early history of ham radio in the Fitchburg area. You will notice that the QSL card Norm is holding in Ralph's 1999 photo (W1/GaZette, Oct. 2009) is from W1LXT, the WPA - Park Dep't Recreation Radio Club of Fitchburg, a forerunner of the present MARA. This is the same card depicted in the club's little booklet, W1GZ: Genesis of a Call Sign. Tnx Norm es 73.

Really enjoyed my too-short trip in December. Good to see and talk to some of the old gang at Ye Olde Timers' Luncheon and the Xmas party. I must thank Pauline or whoever it was who drew my ticket for the Home Depot gift card. Thanks, it has already bought some hardware for my emergency power project.

I can't help thinking that I lucked out again on the weather. In 2008 I left New Hampshire two days before the infamous ice storm; in 2009 I spent a stressful weekend in Athol "white-knuckling" around unfamiliar roads in a 5-inch white-out and then got out of New Hampshire one day before really heavy snow descended the following Wednesday. That doesn't bode well for 2010! I vote to move the Xmas party to summer or move it down here!

Carol and I still miss New England. It has a lot to offer, including friends and family, but each time we think about coming back we get rudely awakened by watching the Weather Channel. Falling thermometers and little white crystals have lost their appeal. Especially when the crystals build up on roads and aircraft wings. Been there, done that more than once. Flew in a blizzard once from Boston and didn't enjoy either the drive to the airport or the flight to Chicago. Especially when the pilot announced, during our take-off run, "They just closed the airport but we're going anyway!" Reminded me too much of seat-of-the-pants take-offs and landings between tides on the narrow beach at Paengny'ong-do (aka Py-Do or K-53), a mountainous island off the Korean mainland.

NZ1D can found most days monitoring 14.300 MHz (Intercon and Maritime Mobile Nets) or on 442.900 K4FC repeater, which is available 24/7 via Echolink from just about anywhere in ham-dom.

## ARDF Update: Foxes, Fitness and Fun in 2010

By Joe Moell K0OV  
ARRL Amateur Radio Direction Finding  
Coordinator  
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February 24, 2010

“Geeks in the woods!” That's how Jay Hennigan, WB6RDV, of Goleta, California, describes Amateur Radio Direction Finding (ARDF). Several times a year, Jay gets together with friends for a session of this international Amateur Radio sport -- also called foxtailing and radio-orienteeing. California hams (and would-be hams!) arrive from cities as far away as San Diego, San Luis Obispo and Lancaster to these local events.

As they set out, five 2 meter “foxes” are somewhere in the woods, transmitting for one minute each in sequence. Armed with a special ARDF set or just a handheld transceiver with a measuring-tape Yagi and attenuator, they see how fast they can run or walk from the start to each transmitter in optimum order and then back to the start, or perhaps to a separate finish point. To help them navigate, they carry compasses and special orienteeing maps, but they aren't allowed to have GPS displays or other high-tech navigation aids.

Standardized ARDF courses provide a good test of equipment performance and hunter skill. It's friendly competition combined with great exercise. It attracts “techies” and “jocks” of all ages, who don't need a ham license to get started. And for some, it leads to medals at national and international competitions.

Similar informal sessions take place regularly during weather-friendly months in other places around the country, including Albuquerque, Boston and Cincinnati. If there are no such opportunities in your area, why not get the ball rolling yourself? Read about the international rules and simple equipment then talk it up at your local radio club. A future championship foxtailer may be sitting there, waiting for your encouragement and support

### USA ARDF Championships Take Place in Ohio this May

Many of the radio-orienteeers attending these sessions are preparing for the 10th USA ARDF Championships, taking place near Cincinnati, Ohio on the weekend of May 21-23, 2010. This is one week after the Dayton Hamvention®, where the annual Foxhunting Forum will be led by the championship's organizers.

The championship's headquarters of will be in Franklin, Ohio -- halfway between Dayton and Cincinnati. Formal activities begin on Friday with a practice and equipment testing session. The championship 2 meter competition will start early on Saturday in a nearby forest, followed by a banquet that evening. On Sunday, the 80 meter competition and medal award ceremony will take place in a different location.

Organizers of the 2010 championships are members of OH-KY-IN Amateur Radio Society, Orienteering Cincinnati (OCIN) and the Butler County VHF Association (led by Bob Frey, WA6EZV, and Dick Arnett, WB4SUV). These are the same folks who put on the very successful 2003 USA and IARU Region 2 Championships, although the 2010 competitions will take place in different forests. Bob and Dick have won

medals at previous USA championships and have been on USA's team to the World Championships four times.

USA's ARDF Championships are open to all, regardless of radio-orienteeing skill level or ham radio licensing status. Medals will be awarded for the top three finishers on each band in 11 age categories: six for males and five for females.

Registration is now open. For the second year, there is no entry fee for first-time participants and for persons coming from outside North America. The form is available for download at the championship's official Web site. That site also has lodging suggestions and information about two optional days of intense ARDF training just before the championships.

*from The ARRL Letter  
February 25, 2010*

<http://www.arrl.org/arrlletter/?issue=2010-02-25>

### Illinois Teams with Amateur Radio Operators to Create RACES Program

A newly forged partnership between Amateur Radio operators throughout the state of Illinois and the Illinois Emergency Management Agency (IEMA) will provide an additional layer of emergency communications during disasters. The agreement creates the State Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Services (RACES) program. Under the agreement, IEMA Director Andrew Velasquez appointed ARRL Illinois Section Emergency Coordinator Brad

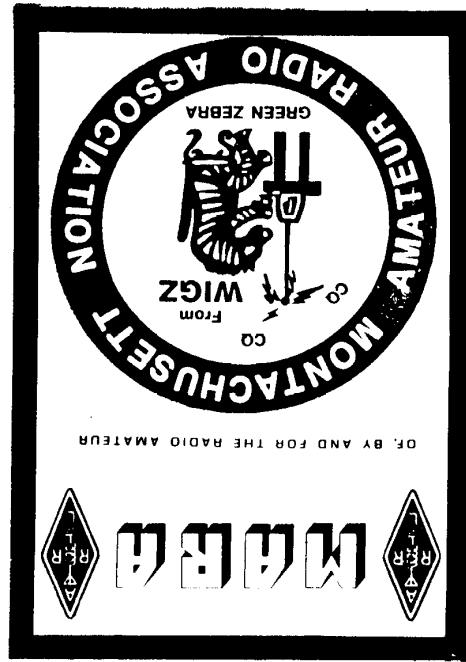
Pioveson, W9FX, of Benton as the volunteer State RACES Officer. Pioveson will serve as the single point of contact between IEMA and the Illinois Amateur Radio community.

“We have not had an Amateur Radio presence in IEMA since 1993,” Pioveson said. “Getting those doors opened has been a collective effort including our Illinois State Government Liaison Charlie Richey, K9DUE, Macoupin County EMA Director Jim Pitchford, N9LQF, and Illinois Section Manager Tom Ciciora, KA9QPN. While there are some county-level RACES programs around Illinois, many of our ARES® members are not familiar with the RACES program, so the first order of the day is to educate our folks about the differences between RACES and ARES®, get some additional RACES programs established and start 'dual-hat' enrollments. Needless to say, we're excited!”

There are more than 20,000 federally licensed Amateur Radio operators in Illinois. Pioveson said there are 500 privately owned, wide-area voice and data communications systems in place within Illinois that can be pressed into service during emergencies. “Amateur Radio operators have a very rich history of providing emergency communications. On behalf of the dedicated volunteer emergency communicators who are Illinois ham radio operators, I am delighted to have forged this new agreement with IEMA.”

*from The ARRL Letter  
February 4, 2010*

<http://www.arrl.org/arrlletter/index.html?issue=2010-02-04>



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