

MARA W1⚡GaZette



February 2011

MONTACHUSETT AMATEUR RADIO ASSOCIATION

Vol 53 No. 5

Next Meeting

Wednesday, February 9
7:30PM
Public Safety Building
Lunenburg MA

MARA's February meeting will be held in the training room of the Lunenburg Public Safety Building (a.k.a. Police and Fire headquarters). We thank the Lunenburg Police and Fire Chiefs for allowing us the use of this room as there is another event at the Lunenburg Public Library.

Please park in the drill area at the far right rear corner of the building. The training room door is at the rear center of the building.

President's Corner

Hi everyone. I don't know about you, but I think it's time winter turned the switch off! As I write this, the weather service is issuing yet another storm advisory for more of the white stuff and again on a Wednesday. If this keeps up, we will not see another meeting until May! It's too bad, because we now have to try to cram more information and planning into other meetings. If anyone has engineering skills,

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Contributors To This Issue:

KB1LRL, AB1GF, W1HFN, KT1I

we could build an igloo style meeting house in the middle of Doyle Field. Hi-hi.

The one thing that will happen is I am putting together a celebration of sorts for the March meeting. Usually I have a show and tell, but I am rolling it into this. I have invited Tom Frenaye K1KI and Mike Raisbeck K1TWF, our division director and vice director, to the meeting. Anyone who may have photos, newsletters, radios, projects they have from the early days to bring them in and show them off. If anyone would like to volunteer a treat or two would be great as well. Let's make this a fun event.

Charlie KT1I has also put together a special event station to celebrate our 60 years. He will be posting more info on this. This event will be done at our own QTH. I'm looking forward to this one. Hopefully we will get a

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, 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/>

President's Corner

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lot of QSO's. Obviously, the more, the merrier.

In trying to stay optimistic and get a warm feeling is thinking about field day. Currently our space is reserved at Academy

Hill, but we are looking at securing our spot on Mt. Wachusett and will go there if it's available. As you know, last year was rather disappointing for various reasons. We achieved our objective, but I feel we do not even come close to our potential as to what we can do. Give it some thought and put some ideas together. As usual, I could use 1 or 2 people to help organize this. Let me know if you can.

I have been working on a couple of projects as I have mentioned earlier, One is getting a rtty setup going and Gordon, N1MGO has been helping me in this. I can honestly say this opened my eyes to the fact that I short-sighted myself and expected a plug and play device to work right out of the box....NOT! As I watched Gordon work the software and the appliances, I realized that getting software, interfaces, and radios, to marry up and work together was a challenge. I did not expect this to be quite the project. (Neither did he!) But it made me realize I may not have been putting as much of an effort as I should of in learning the vast applications that this hobby has to offer and need to. I also marvel at Gordon's seemingly unlimited skills in all of this and more. I personally, want to express my sincere appreciation to N1MGO for his help and also for his inspiration. To all reading this, "Got Elmer?" "BE ELMER!"

That's it for this month. Warm up the shovels and snowblowers. Hopefully I'll see you at February's meeting.

73 Ray KB1LRL

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

VE Team Report

The MARA Volunteer Examiner Team conducted a total of three license exam sessions in 2010 serving 8 examinees.

The new licenses earned were:

Technician	1
General	5
Extra	1

The examiners and number of sessions served were:

K1YTS	2
KD1SM	3
KD1YH	2
KK1X	3
KT1I	1
N1HVA	1

Thank you to each of the examiners. We expect the demand for sessions will pick up in 2011; we discovered in the second half of 2010 that our sessions were not being listed by the ARRL exam site query tool.

The VE Team holds Amateur Radio license exam sessions on the 4th Wednesday of the month. Preregistration is required as we cancel the session if no examinees are registered by the weekend before the scheduled session.

No session was held in January; the next session is scheduled for February 23.

WA1NAQ SK

MARA Members are saddened by another silent key in our ranks. John (Jack) Fields WA1NAQ became a silent key on January 19.

Jack was another long-time MARA regular until his health prevented him from attending Club meetings. He frequently brought show and tell items along with many stories.

He graduated from Fitchburg High School, class of 1938 and worked at Simplex Time Recorder CO, retiring in 1982. He also worked 23 years at United Co-op grocery store in Fitchburg, where he had been the Dairy Department Manager.

We extend our condolences to Jack's two sons, daughters-in-law, and five grandchildren, their wives, 10 great-grandchildren, and 6 great-great-grandchildren.

VHF Contest Results

Tom AB1GF reports:

ab1gf/r

score 2640

100 contacts

4 grids activated

1st place limited rover New England

8th place overall limited Rover

<http://www.arrl.org/contest-results-articles>

Barry W1HFN reports:

June VHF Party 1068 out of 1202

Sept VHF Party 439 out of 488

I did have fun, nice to be back on 6 M, last QSO on that band 1965.

Special Event Station; MARA 60

de Charlie KT1I

Announcing a Special Event Station celebrating the 60th Anniversary of MARA.

1300Z to 2100Z Sunday March 13th.

Operation will be on 15, 20, 40 and 75 meter bands SSB and digital.

Operate from the comfort of your shack! If enough people commit themselves, time segments will be split up.

Here's a chance to do something different!

The more operators, the merrier and the lighter the load for all. Come hear more at the Club meeting.

January Meeting

The January meeting was canceled due to snow; see page one.

Boston Marathon Amateur Radio Volunteer Signup is Now Open

With close to three feet of snow on the ground now it may seem that the Marathon is in a time a long into the future. While you're toasting your toes and resting those muscles sore from shoveling the stuff, go over to that keyboard and navigate to

<http://marc.mmra.org>

and volunteer to provide radio communications for the 2011 Boston Marathon, to be held on Monday April 18.

It takes over two hundred Amateur Radio operators to support this event. There are three teams of Hams; the Hopkington crew, the Downtown Boston crew, and the Course crew. As you might guess, the Hopkington crew gets the runners started safely and are secured from their stations after the race is underway. The Course crew are assigned to the first aid stations along the course. These stations are setup a couple of hours before the race starts and are secured as the last of the runners pass.

The Downtown Boston crew convenes early in the morning due to the necessary road closings and security measures all around the many-block finish area. This crew supports all the finish line medical folk setting up the medical tents and chute area, then provides the medical logistics communication as the runners cross the finish line.

If you are interested in participating, most of the Hams from the MARA area volunteer for the Boston crew lead by Paul W1SEX. Carpooling makes the trek into Boston

simpler for participants and the carpools typically stop somewhere for pizza on the evening return trip. Talk with KD1SM, KK1X, N1UZ, or KB1LRL if you'd like to learn more before you sign up.

Groton Road Race - April 10

The Groton Road Race is nearing its 20th year. It brings about a thousand runners to the town of Groton on a Sunday afternoon in April. There are two events; a 5k race and a 10k race. Both depend on Amateur Radio to provide logistics and safety communications. The Squannacook River Runners -- the event organizers -- have turned to Amateur Radio since the second year of the event.

The Groton Police Chiefs have said over and over again that the Amateur Radio operators are critical to their ability to handle this large event.

In previous years the Groton Road Race has been at the end of April. This year due to the Easter holiday the Race is being held earlier in the month.

Please talk with Ralph KD1SM and hold Sunday April 10 in your calendars. This is one of the premier events at which we show to the community the value of our skills, our licenses, and the precious radio spectrum that is made available to us. There is no better feeling that to receive some of the many expressions of thanks from a runner as they pass your station.

ARRL New England Division Cabinet Meeting

The ARRL Board of Directors meets twice a year; in January and July. One or two weeks before the Board meeting, New England Division Director Tom Frenaye K1KI invites all Club Presidents and ARRL Section Managers and their senior appointees to a “cabinet meeting” to discuss matters that might come before the Board and get the pulse of the Amateur Radio operators in New England.

The January New England Division Cabinet Meeting was held on Saturday, January 15 in Springfield MA. Over thirty Section Managers, Assistant Section Managers, Club Presidents, Vice Presidents, and a couple of ARRL staff participated.

Among the topics discussed were the new ARRL Web site; how well it is meeting the needs of the long-time Hams in finding the information they need and how well it is attracting new people into Amateur Radio. There were many comments from those who found the old site more to their liking but several noted that the new look was likely to be more attractive to newcomers.

Also discussed in the context of the Web site was asking ARRL do to more digital publishing. K1KI noted that there is an ongoing consideration within the ARRL publications bureau on when to publish a digital version of a printed publication. Concerns about illegal duplication as well as consideration of the audience to which a given publication is attractive are all being evaluated.

K1KI gave a brief update on FCC activities. He noted that the BPL issue is not quite

dead yet; the FCC has still not replied to the court order issued two years ago to respond to ARRL’s formal complaint that certain technical data on which the FCC based its unfavorable BPL ruling was not made available for public examination.

Mike Raisbeck K1TWF, New England Division Vice Director, observed that the FCC is looking “all over the place” for spectrum to satisfy the National Broadband goals to add 500 Mhz of spectrum for broadband use. Mike and Tom believe this is the biggest current threat to Amateur radio spectrum. The 2.3GHz and 3.4 GHz bands are most at risk.

Mentioning other legislative matters, K1TWF also reported that the “Amateur Radio Emergency Communications Enhancement Act” has been re-introduced into Congress. The objective of this bill is to direct is the Secretary of Homeland Security to study the uses and capabilities of Amateur Radio communications in emergencies and disaster relief and to identify and make recommendations regarding impediments to Amateur Radio communications, such as the effects of private land use regulations on residential antenna installations. For more information, see the ARRL news item

<http://www.arrl.org/arrlletter?issue=2011-01-13#toc01>

It will help if we let our Representatives and Senators know of our desire that they support this legislation.

Tom K1KI reported that planning is starting for an ARRL national convention in New England to celebrate the 100th anniversary of ARRL in 2014. That year is also the ‘on’ year for the Boxboro convention and there is discussion underway about the

possibility of having a combined event. If that were to happen, a different location needs to be found as the Boxboro site cannot handle the number of attendees that would be expected at a national convention.

Two club representatives from Connecticut briefed the meeting on a new FEMA course that is being released by the FEMA Telecommunications Section covering the role of Amateur Radio in emergency communication. This course coins a new term, "Auxiliary Emergency Communicator", to avoid the misunderstandings associated with the name "Amateur Radio Operator".

The beta version of the course appeared to be targeted primarily at Hams, to recommend how to fit into a FEMA emergency operation. It was stated that the course will be required of all Emergency Managers, however.

Tom K1KI concluded the discussion with a status report of licensing activity in the Division. He indicated that the total number of licensees continues to rise and that nationwide we are near to an all-time high for the number of licensed Amateur Radio operators. ARRL membership is holding approximately steady according to Tom.

Tom also reported that ARRL is considering a move to electronic ballots for elections. This is in part a cost saving initiative but the hope is also to increase participation. It turns out that another reason for the move is that the ballots used in the Director and Vice Director elections are counted by a 1950's era machine whose various belts are wearing out -- and these belts are made from Unobtainium.

reported by Ralph KD1SM

Amateur Radio in the Classroom: ARRL Executive Committee Approves Grants for Five Schools

In December 2010, the ARRL Executive Committee reviewed grant applications for the ARRL's Education & Technology Program (ETP), awarding equipment valued at nearly \$5000 to five schools. More than 525 schools across the country have received support from the ETP in the form of grants for equipment, curriculum and resources, as well as teacher in-service training through the Teachers Institute on Wireless Technology. Applications for equipment and resource grants are accepted twice each year; application deadlines are May 1 and November 1. Applications for 2011 summer sessions of the Teachers Institute are currently being accepted. Read more at

<http://www.arrl.org/news/arrl-executive-committee-approves-grant-funding-for-five-schools>

From the ARRL Letter, January 13, 2011

Winter Isn't Over

With the winter storms we've been seeing recently, ARES volunteers are prepared to bring emergency communications on line when requested. Please monitor one of the SKYWARN or ARES repeaters; 145.37 and 146.97 are good choices, during severe weather. If Net Control asks for local reports, listen to what is requested and offer your report. It will be received with appreciation!



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