

MERCURY AMATEUR RADIO ASSOCIATION

MARA - NORTH AMERICA - NORTH EAST



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E-mail your comments, ideas, or submissions to marane@mara.net

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VIEW FROM THE TOP

Neither the President nor the Vice President has supplied any material. Maybe in September when they are all rested up...



MEMBER PROFILE – N3HS

Howard Stanley (Stan) Staten, N3HS

After graduating from Olympus High School in 1958, I attended the University of Utah in Electrical Engineering and Naval Science, graduating Magna Cum Laude in 1963 with a BS in Electrical Engineering and a Commission in the US Navy. I spent a year at various schools and aboard a guided missile frigate. I then went to work for Admiral H.G. Rickover on his nuclear submarine design staff in Washington, DC. I also picked up motorcycle riding as a method of commuting, with a BSA Lightning Rocket. It was at that time some friends at work helped me to get my ham ticket as WA7IKJ. I originally licensed as a tech with the 5 WPM code test,

and at that time, the general written exam. I tried to upgrade to general several times flunking the 13 wpm code test 5 times. I had been using an Instrograph paper tape system and had apparently memorized the tape. Sure is a lot easier now with all the ways to learn code. I finally bought a used EICO 753 tri-band transceiver and used it to copy the W1AW code broadcast each night, when I was available, for a month and finally passed the 13 wpm test. I then took the advanced test and came away with an advanced license.



Figure 1 - N3HS's antenna farm. From right to left – a tower with two beams (Cushcraft X-7 and 50-1300 LP) with a Diamond X-50 2/440 on top. A bit left of center is a vertical antenna (AV-640 40-6m) and to the left of that, in the leaves of the tree, is a brown water pipe with another X-50. And, if you enlarge the picture, you can glimpse an 80/40 inverted-v coming down from the left side of the tower starting just under the rotor. (N3HS photo)

I returned to the U of U in 1969 for four more years of school, during which I operated from the married student apartment with whatever equipment I could afford. I got poorer and poorer as time went on and ended with a TenTec PM-3a QRP rig which I regularly used on CW. I got comfortable in the 15 wpm range, but not the 20 wpm needed for extra. After school I returned to the DC area to work for the Atomic Energy Commission on the breeder reactor. Not being in the service any more, I needed to change my call sign to the area in which I was living and became K4JOB for four years. When I moved closer to work, another change was required and I became W3INK. (Some may remember the 3WINKS BBS that

was on for eleven years (1984-1995), before the internet took us all by storm.)

When the breeder project was cancelled I moved over to work on Magnetic Fusion Energy, coordinating development of high power plasma heating technology, both by Radio Frequency and Neutral Beams. Because of the success in application of the neutral beams, I was then made the HQ manager for the project to prepare the Tokamak Fusion Test Reactor at Princeton to demonstrate the feasibility of fusion power by using the neutral beams to heat the TFTR plasma to hotter than the surface of the sun.

My final nine years at the Energy Department were spent as the Environment, Safety and Health officer for the Office of Basic Energy Science, a \$1B basic research program. I was brought into that program to work on the problem that they were having with a small research reactor at the Brookhaven National Laboratory. We lost that one and lost a very valuable research tool because of the impossibility of communicating in a very charged political atmosphere. The final \$2.5M Environmental Impact Statement was scrapped and not published for purely political reasons.



Figure 2 - Command central for N3HS (N3HS photo)

During this time I made a new year's resolution to get the extra license before the code requirement was reduced or dropped all together. It took me eight months to get there using mostly the W1AW code broadcast which I would record every few days onto a portable cassette player to keep fresh material in front of

me. Shortly thereafter, I changed my call to N3HS which matches my initials.

As to my personal life, I married Diane Scott and am the father of eleven children. Diane and I now spend our time with the grand kids and doing voluntary service at the local Family History Center in Germantown, MD, and the LDS Temple on the Washington, DC beltway and enjoying every minute of it.



CULTURED CORNER

There once was a Ham with a Hummer
Who thought of himself quite the stunner
Spent his dollars so large
To outfit the big barge
And then had no gas, what a bummer!

Anonymous MARA member

GRANDMA MARA'S CORNER

For all the chocolate lovers out there here's a recipe for chocolate sauce. Pour it over ice cream or mix it with milk for the grandkids (or the grandkid in you). I don't know where it originated so if anyone should ask just say it came from Grandma.

CHOCOLATE SYRUP

2 cups of semi sweet chocolate chips
½ cup of margarine
½ teaspoon of salt
1 tablespoon of vanilla

Mix together and melt in microwave for a minute and then stir until ingredients are blended smoothly.

In a second deeper bowl mix the following:

1 cup of light corn syrup
1 cup of hot water
2 cups of icing sugar

Now mix everything and stir thoroughly together until smooth.

Store covered in refrigerator until needed.

Reheat in microwave to consistency as required.

If any of you have a favorite recipe, how about sharing it with Grandma Mara so she can post it on here for others to enjoy? Send it to Grandma's attention in care of

ve1vq@eastlink.ca



TECH STUFF

ARE WE THERE YET?

OR - GETTING YOUR ANTENNA UP IN THE AIR - PART 1

Charlie Brown has a terrible time with trees! They seem to lurk, just waiting to snare his kites. That may be for the Peanuts comic strip character, but for the ham world, trees are handy things to have around when you need something to support an antenna. That raises a problem (pardon the pun)! Unless you have a bucket truck handy, someone has to climb to get wires up where they can be useful! If you are into post middle age (sounds better than "getting old") and/or have a fear of heights, you start to look around for alternate methods. Solutions range from a bow and arrow, to bags or plastic soda bottles filled with sand or water, to balls, to slingshots, to pneumatic devices. Judging from recent comments on the reflector, many prefer the slingshot.



WARNING - IT IS ILLEGAL IN SOME AREAS TO POSSESS A SLINGSHOT.

SLINGSHOT

If you want, you can buy an already assembled device called the [EZ HANG](#) for \$89 or you can make your own. It's not that hard!

There are at least two ways to go about it. One is to make one something similar to the device shown in figure 3. To do that, visit the sporting



Figure 3 – The EZ Hang combination of slingshot and fishing reel. Their web site is <http://www.ezhang.com>

section of your local Wal-Mart or equivalent discount store and buy a slingshot, a closed face fishing reel and a package of 1 oz. fishing weights (see the pictures below).



Figure 4 – Slingshot with wrist support. The support gives you more control (accuracy). You can pick these up for as little as \$10.

Figure 5 – Closed face (spin casting) fishing reel. Stay away from the ones under \$20 unless they are on sale. Cheaper ones usually have more friction on the line as it escapes the cover, limiting the distance your shot will travel.



Figure 6 – Lead fishing weights. Use the 1 to 1.5 oz. versions and remember to use gloves or to wash your hands after handling. These fly and drop through tree limbs better than some old bolt you found under your car.

Next, visit the plumbing department and find a few inches of plastic or rubber tubing with an inside diameter to fit the wrist support rail and an outside diameter to more or less fit the curvature of the fishing reel mount. While you're there, pick up a couple of small adjustable hose clamps. Use a sharp knife to slit the tubing lengthwise and slip it over the rail. Clamp the reel in place with the hose clamps.

One advantage of having the reel and slingshot together is that you can find them both when you lay them down on the ground in the grass or weeds or bushes. It always amazes me how quickly those little devils can hide!



Figure 7 – Your average adjustable hose clamp.

A second way to construct one of these is to use a long blade screwdriver or weed removal tool. Clamp the reel to the tool handle and stick the sharp end in the ground. This method also has the advantage of keeping the reel away from your face.

Check the line that comes with the reel. Too light a line will see your lead weight disappearing off into the distance with the line slowly settling to the ground. Too heavy and there will be excessive drag in the reel and your maximum height may not be high enough for what you need. Use between ten and fifteen pound test monofilament line.

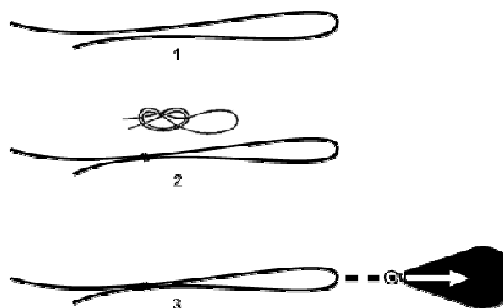


Figure 8 – Tie a simple loop knot to secure the fishing weight. Thread the fishing line loop through the wire eye on the weight, over the bottom and up the rear side.

Don't forget to push the line release button on the reel before making the shot. Otherwise the weight only travels a very short distance before returning violently toward a vulnerable part of your anatomy.

Be very aware of what lies beyond the tree limb you are shooting over. Your neighbours will not appreciate it if you smash a house window or dent their new Porsche! If you don't have a clear area beyond the target, consider using another way to achieve your goal.

With any luck, your shots will go exactly where you intend (yeah right!). If not, slowly pull the fishing line back through the tree limbs until the weight is clear and try again. If you try to be speedy, the weight will loop itself around a limb and then you will have to break the line. Once the end of the line is within reach on the far side of the tree, remove the sinker and tie on a return line of twine. Haul this line back and use it to pull the final support rope up in place.

Always check the slingshot tubing for cracks or cuts before each use. Always wear safety glasses or goggles.

THINK SAFE. ACT SAFE. BE SAFE

**---
CHECK EQUIPMENT BEFORE USE.**

ALWAYS WEAR EYE PROTECTION.



IN SEPTEMBER'S NEWSLETTER ...

- WHERE WAS AA3LS?
- ARE WE THERE YET? – PART 2

SWAP SHOP

BUY – SELL – TRADE - GIVE AWAY

YOUR AD HERE – NO CHARGE!



DI-DAH-DI-DAH-DIT

You know, I don't think of myself as "old"! Even when my joints ache if I've been sitting too long at the computer, or the food portions in restaurants seem too large, or if my wife complains that I can't hear her and for me to "GET YOUR HEARING CHECKED". Shirrel's comments in "View From The Top" in last month's newsletter did make me take another look at the pictures of the annual meeting. And,

you know, he is correct! We are getting grayer! That does not apply to the special women in our lives, I hasten to add.

We've had three strong members (Dick NG2R, Chic WA2USI, and Art W1OND) die in the last few years. What can we do about filling in the gaps these people have left behind? Obviously we have to think about getting more people interested in this thing we call ham radio and emergency communications. Whether it's someone young or someone our age, we need to be about finding them.

How about suggesting to the activities person that your ward or branch hold a hobbies night where members can show off their accomplishments, or having an emergency preparedness fair where you can install your two meter and/or HF rig and talk about ham radio and emergency communications (maybe make up some posters about how amateurs help during and after natural and man-made disasters). Connect a laptop and decode some PSK-31. Let people tune around. Make these events open to the public and use it for a missionary tool as well.

Do you have any active hams in your ward, branch, or stake that are inactive church-wise? Let them know about the MARA nets and the web sites. See if they are interested in getting on the air for the Saturday morning net or for NE3Z's first Sunday of the month ECS net (either HF or VHF or both).

If the kid next door asks why you have all that wire or those towers in your back yard and don't they attract lightning, invite him or her over for a show and tell. Keep it simple and don't overload them with information. Let them turn some knobs and make a voice contact with them if they seem ready. Spark their interest!

See if anyone would like to hold or attend a ham beginner's course. Perhaps you could get the local club to put on such a course for members and non-members using the chapel. Several wards/stakes have had Bishops and Stake Presidents become licensed. Be prepared for no-shows, dropouts or loss of interest after passing. Others have had the same experiences. Even if you get one single individual licensed and active on the air then remember Doctrine & Covenants 18:16.

If you have already tried these things (or others), let us know how they worked by sending a write-up for publication in this newsletter.

Until next month,
VE1VQ



ANNUAL SUMMER EMPLOYEE REBELLION

Try as we might, it's hard to get people to work six days a week and fifty-two weeks a year.

SOOOO...

There will NOT be a newsletter for the month of August. The next issue will be on the web site around the first of September.



MARK IT ON YOUR CALENDARS

May 2nd 2009 for the MARA NorthEast Annual Meeting at Nazareth Ward, Scranton PA Stake