



SPRING, WITH ITS GLORIOUS  
SMELL OF FRESH CUT GRASS  
... UNLESS YOU HAVE ALLERGIES!

# NEWSLETTER

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Mercury Amateur Radio Association - MARA - North America - North East

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## OTHER STUFF

E-mail your comments, ideas, or submissions to [marane@mara.net](mailto:marane@mara.net)

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## VIEW FROM THE TOWER



## OH, THAT I COULD HAVE HAD MY DAYS IN THE DAYS...

by Dave VE1VQ

The following is an edited version of an article that originally appeared in the February 1985 issue of the Ensign magazine. For the full story, go to [http://www.lds.org/ldsorg/v/index.jsp?vgnextoid=2354fccf2b7db010VgnVCM1000004d82620aRCRD&locale=0&sourceId=b3788949f2f6b010VgnVCM1000004d82620a\\_\\_\\_&hideNav=1](http://www.lds.org/ldsorg/v/index.jsp?vgnextoid=2354fccf2b7db010VgnVCM1000004d82620aRCRD&locale=0&sourceId=b3788949f2f6b010VgnVCM1000004d82620a___&hideNav=1) [If this link does not work when clicked upon, copy and paste to your browser - Ed]

“CQ—CQ—CQ from LDS Radio Group,” *Ensign*, Feb. 1985, 78–79

The Mercury Amateur Radio Association (MARA) is looking for LDS amateur radio operators to prepare for emergency service to fellow Saints and neighbors.

MARA President Allan Packer of Salt Lake City (call letters WA7BKD) said that during natural disasters or other emergencies in their areas, MARA ham radio operators make themselves available to help local priesthood leaders keep contact with other Saints and with Church leaders in Salt Lake City or in other regions of the Church. They may also help meet communication needs of state and local governments or private individuals.

During a hurricane in Hawaii a few years ago, for example, MARA operators on the mainland kept contact with the islands longer than any other amateur shortwave radio net. Following an Idaho earthquake in late 1983, MARA members again served as emergency communicators for priesthood leaders. Then the state’s Emergency Management Office asked if it could join the MARA net because its own communication system was

not providing the coverage needed.

In times of emergency, radio amateurs have some advantages over commercial communication networks because they have so many broadcast bands and frequencies available, explained MARA vice-president George Oates (K7BFI). The amateurs also are valuable for their resourcefulness—“the ability to make something work when nothing else does,” Brother Allan Packer added.

He explained that the organization has about two hundred members in the continental United States and Canada and in locales throughout the world, including Hawaii, Guam, Tahiti, Western Samoa, Central and South America, South Africa, England, Finland, and Japan. MARA has mailed materials to several hundred Church members who are amateur radio operators, but the organization believes there are other LDS amateurs of whom they are unaware. MARA would like to contact them.

Members get a quarterly bulletin. Past issues have included a series of articles on emergency operations and equipment. **[Does anybody have any copies of these MARA bulletins? – Ed]**

MARA not only provides an opportunity for amateurs with a common bond to train for emergencies, it also serves as “a clearinghouse for information” about setting up local emergency communication systems, Brother Packer said. That way, what has been learned in one area can be applied in another.

[For further information and history about MARA, see <http://www.mara.net/12052008.pdf> - Ed]

Ah, the glory days! Old tyme MARA folks have been dreaming of a return to those happy days of yore for a long time, but time and tide have moved on. Acronyms have changed. People have changed. Attitudes have changed. In the years immediately after the disconnection of the Church and MARA, and the change to priesthood directed emergency

communications, there appeared to be a suspicious ‘us and them’ attitude from some of those involved in the new group. Almost like, ‘we’d better be careful or those MARA people might try to infiltrate and stage a coup’.

Whatever the feelings back then, that attitude seems to be gone. Some Church EmComm personnel have gone

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the extra mile and drawn in people from the MARA groups to fill empty positions, or to encourage their participation in Church HF and VHF nets. Many other LDS (MARA or not) hams maintain their equipment in order to be able to assist if and whenever called upon.

Without a real purpose and direction, MARA Central ceased operation some years ago. The various MARA chapters floundered; some faded away, while others managed the transition to being on their own, and found their own 'raison d'être'.

So, if you are one of those old timers waiting for the leadership to 'come to their senses' and revive MARA, forget it! It's time to let it go! Regardless of what you personally think about the new system working in your area, it will be decided when an emergency occurs. Those in charge will learn from what happens, and changes will be made to correct shortcomings.

Church leaders do the best they can with the resources they have to work with. Stake presidents and bishops (like most people I know) are very busy with the 'here and now', and unless prodded by a situation, place a lower priority on future 'what if's'.

## **ALL YOU CAN DO IS BE PREPARED FOR THE TIME WHEN YOU MAY BE CALLED UPON.**

All you can do is to maintain your own station and be prepared for the time when you may be called upon. Check into the Saturday morning MARA net. Call into the DC Storehouse net on the first Sunday evening of each month. Maintain a list of the Church storehouse nets and frequencies. Join your local ARES or emergency response group. Do the best you can with what you've got!

You do want to be ready for that future emergency, don't you? Even if it's only so you can say, 'I-told-you-so'.

### **IN MAY'S NEWSLETTER...**

**USING EZNEC ANTENNA MODELLING SOFTWARE ON A REAL ANTENNA.**

**DO YOU KNOW WHERE YOUR RF IS GOING WHEN IT LEAVES THE NEST?**

## **CULTURED CORNER**

by ANØNMS

### **GRASS**

*Grass is Nature's way of dealing  
With a patch of ground that's bare  
Lots of love and fertilizer  
Makes a difference to its care*

*Lots of bugs will love your green grass  
Moving in to chow right down  
Do their best to make it homey  
Helping it turn all nice and brown*

*Half your time to make it grow tall  
Other half to mow it short  
Wonder why you spend so much time  
When could do other summer sport*

*All that time to make it look good  
Might be put to better use  
Pave it over with black asphalt  
And paint it all with lime chartreuse*

## **GRANDMA MARA'S CORNER**

### **MY FAVORITE SEASON!**

**F**inally, after what seems to be a longer, snowier, colder winter than usual, we've made it to Spring. At least that's what the old folks have been saying about the length and breadth of this past Winter season. It might be my imagination but it seems to me that those same oldsters say the same thing every year! Regardless of the quality of their and my memory, it is nice to smell the smells of Spring once again.

I even managed to find all of the pieces of my ride-on lawn mower deck that I very carefully put away last fall, so I would know just where to find them again. I put it back together with only a couple of nuts and bolts left over. When this happens I always know the manufacturer must have thrown in a few spare bits!

Spring is my favorite season, with all of the green things just raring to grow. The leaves are fresh and new, not tired out looking like they are by the end of summer. Temperatures are not too hot yet, things are not parched

and dry. There is so much promise inherent in this season of the year.

Speaking of promises, I told the Bishop I'd get something geared up when he asked me last week to take on the assignment of Ward emcomms. What did I do with that coil of antenna wire and spool of coax I picked up at last Fall's local ham club flea market?

Better get to it... winter'll be here before you know it!

*Grandma Mava*

## APRIL NOT SO TECH STUFF

by VE1VQ

### THE MAGIC OF SMOKE

Every ham should know about smoke; an actual material inserted in every electronic component at the time of manufacture. Smoke is absolutely necessary for correct and proper operation.

The proof that it is a requirement, can be seen in the fact that when the smoke escapes, the component fails to work. You may say that the smoke is caused because

### SMOKE IS A NECESSARY PART OF EVERY ELECTRONIC COMPONENT.

of excess current through the component causing over heating and burn-out, but experienced electronics technicians and a few engineers know better.

Other names for it are blue smoke, magic blue smoke or factory smoke.

How the smoke makes these component work is a closely guarded secret of the manufacturers! Sort of like the Cadbury Caramilk and the CocaCola processes.

One of the common tests run on assembled devices is the 'burn-in' or 'smoke' test. The device is run for a period of time at a specified voltage to make sure that the smoke stays in the parts where it is supposed to be. Should any leak out, the assembly is deemed to be defective and returned for rework. It is necessary to completely replace the problem part as it is impossible,

in the field, to reinsert the smoke.

### APRIL FOOLS & OTHER FUN ARTICLES

For many years, various ham radio magazines have featured an April Fool's article in their April issue. Some have been easy to spot, while others have been more of a challenge to separate from the real thing. As a new ham, I remember carefully reading through some in QST Magazine in the late 1960's and 1970's trying to figure out if they were actually possible.

### LARSEN (LARSON) E. RAPP, W1OU

While searching the internet for ham radio related April Fools jokes, I came across mention of Larsen E. Rapp, W1OU, who wrote on various subjects, and whose articles would often appear in the April issue of QST. These were actually written by Byron H. "By" Goodman, W1DX (ex-W6CAL, W1JPE), of East Hartford, Connecticut, a long time ARRL staffer. He died May 11, 2004.

Rapp's collected works may be viewed at <http://www.arrl.org/tis/info/larson/>

### HASHAFISTI SCRATCHI

Between 1948 and 1960, and then again from 1966 to 1971, CQ Magazine carried articles purportedly written by 'Hashafisti Scratchi', a Japanese - American, about his ham radio exploits near 'Feenix', Ariz. These were published monthly - not reserved just for the April issue.

By today's standards these columns would probably be considered politically incorrect with the broken English and the poking of fun at the people and poor operating practices

he encountered on the air. He was always getting into trouble over something he did or built, and then having to hide out at his brother Itchi's ranch.



The person who penned 'Hashafisti' for all those years was George H. Floyd, Jr., WA4DGA, an engineer at General Electric. George died at the age of 91 on November 22nd, 2008.

## T.O.M.

Then there was The Old Man (Hiram Percy Maxim) who wrote articles in the very early days of QST, bemoaning the poor operating practices of the time. What would he think of the bands now?

These types of articles, whether they are reserved for the first day of April or not, whether they have a technical bent or not, have always been popular with the amateur radio community. Let's hope that the political correctness police don't have the final say, and that articles of this type continue to entertain, to amuse, and to educate us about ourselves.

## SWAP SHOP

**DELL 3000cn printer** - if anyone can use the toner cartridges or any parts from this printer, you're welcome to them. It stops part way through its startup sequence (it may be the fuser lamp is not coming up or the temperature sensor is gone). It has also had a 'replace drum' message showing for a year (never a good sign!). It is headed for the recycling depot. I also have a new unused cyan cartridge that someone can have. - VE1VQ

## DI-DAH-DI-DAH-DIT

### LETS HEAR IT FOR OPTIMISM!

I saw one of those fluff type street interviews on TV the other day. The question asked was, "what was the favorite time of your life?" You expect to hear the usual things like, "when I was in high school/university", or "when I was a teen-ager" (from a forty-five year old), or "when I was twenty-five" (from a sixty year old). One person surprised me with his answer of "right now".

Think about it. Unless we are in the midst of sickness or pain, or coping with the death of a close friend or family member, in financial distress, or some other of life's traumas, if things are going well in our lives at the moment, what better time should there be in our life then "right now"! Would you really want to be a teen-ager or a twenty-something again, only knowing what you knew then? *Well, it would be nice to not have arthritis!* But seriously, would you want to go back and repeat all of the mistakes and the learning curve over again? I know

I wouldn't! I've always tried to enjoy the 'now', while looking forward with anticipation to the future. I guess that must make me some sort of optimist!

## WHAT BETTER TIME SHOULD THERE BE IN OUR LIFE THEN RIGHT NOW!

The natural man in us wants to turn back the clock and postpone the inevitable for as long as possible. Just look at all of the cosmetics, hair colorings, self-help books and seminars, diets, surgeries, and all of the other anti-aging stuff thrown at us in magazines, radio and television ads, and on the internet, primarily to separate us from our money but also to convince us that we can halt, or at least slow down, the aging process. On the other hand, the spiritual man knows that this life is a journey, a learning process not simply to be "gotten through" but to be enjoyed along the way. It also helps to have a sense of humor and the ability not to take your self too seriously now and then!

Until next month,  
VE1VQ

## MARK IT ON YOUR CALENDARS



**May 30th 2009** for the MARA  
NorthEast Annual Meeting  
at Nazareth Ward,  
Scranton PA Stake

**NOTE  
THE CHANGE  
OF  
DATE  
FROM THE  
2ND OF MAY!**