

The NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2011 VOLUME 11, No. 4

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



MUST BE

AN APRIL FOOL'S JOKE

TO HAVE A RABBIT DELIVERING EGGS!

CONTENTS

- 2** VIEW FROM THE TOWER
IS IT TIME FOR SOME CHANGES? - IF YES, THEN WHAT?
- 3** ELECTION OF OFFICERS
ALMOST THAT TIME AGAIN!
- 3** GRANDMA MARA'S RAMBLINGS
RAMBLINGS OF AN OLDER PERSON - WHAT'S SO CORRECT ABOUT POLITICAL CORRECTNESS?
- 4** CULTURED CORNER
THE FIRST OF APRIL
- 4** TECH STUFF
MORE STATION STUFF
- 5** QUOTE OF THE MONTH
DOUGLAS ADAMS
- 6** DI-DA-DI-DA-DIT
FINAL STUFF - ANYTHING ON APRIL 1st IS SUSPECT

OTHER STUFF

Material contained in this newsletter is copyrighted © by the Mercury Amateur Radio Association North East, or by the person noted. Reproduction of material appearing in this publication is encouraged, as long as the source credit is shown. Permission to reproduce articles copyrighted by the author must be obtained from that individual.

Links that will take you to web locations referenced in this newsletter are shown in [blue](#).

E-mail your comments, ideas, or submissions to marane@mara.net or to ve1vq@eastlink.ca

VIEW FROM THE TOWER

As we approach the time of our annual meeting, I have a few things on my mind for us all to consider and discuss. I observe that over the last three years the number of active LDS hams has increased substantially. The Washington D.C. and Lower Delaware Valley areas in particular have substantial organized operational groups. Our own Saturday morning net has more participants than at any time since I started listening in 2007.

It is time to consider how our society as an association of LDS hams can be expanded, through publicizing MARA among our HF capable fellows, and encouraging the many Technician licensees to upgrade to General. I am considering an Echolink conference net for MARA-NE which could draw our non-HF associates into the association and provide that encouragement, keeping in mind that MARA is social in nature, giving the

How about Echolink?

opportunity to share our amateur radio experience and expertise with our LDS brethren and sisters.

Next, I would like to consider our annual meeting.

Next, I would like to consider our annual meeting. We are expanding but are still very wide-spread geographically. Gathering for the annual meeting has always been a highlight for me, as we get to meet face to face and enjoy this new level of association. Last year's meeting in the Harrisburg PA area was sparsely attended and, as of today, the planned meeting

in Dayton is not much better. There are several reasons this needs to be considered. The election of officers is a primary annual meeting function. Without sufficient attendance, many miss the opportunity to participate as officers and as voting members. Therefore, is it time reconsider our meeting process or election methods? If we could hold meetings more than once a year in locations where same-day travel can be accomplished with some overlap, that might work. I am in central New Jersey and could do same day travel to Virginia or New England.

Other key association issues include election of officers and dues. Could we change our election method to mail-in ballots? Since we have no expenses, other than the annual meeting, are dues still a good methods of maintaining membership? If not, what method of membership maintenance should be adopted?

Could we change our election method to mail-in ballots?

Well, now that I've opened all these cans of worms, I open it to discussion in the Yahoo group. I very much enjoy our association and hope to improve our organization through cooperation and leadership.

73,
Bruce Wortmann
President, MARA-NE

Election of Officers

It happens every couple of years prior to annual meeting time. MARA NE looks around for a few good people to volunteer for a position or two (or three!). This year is no exception. We have two directors (Diana KE3IU and Charles WB4FLM) whose terms expire this year, and two positions to fill, the terms of which would expire in 2013 (one was empty and one was left vacant by the death of Shirrel N3DIX).

As well, the terms of President (N3IA), Secretary (VE1VQ), and Treasurer (N3HS) all expire this year. So to put it in another form, the terms of offices expiring this year are...

1. President
2. Secretary
3. Treasurer
4. Director whose new term will expire in 2017
5. Director whose new term will expire in 2017
6. Director to fill the remaining period until 2013
7. Director to fill the remaining period until 2013

I expect that those re-offering will show their willingness by so indicating in an e-mail on the reflector. On the other hand, if anyone wants out, now is the time.

And, if you are so inclined, throw your hat into the ring by indicating which position you are interested in filling by doing the same.

Grandma Mara's RAMBLINGS

Most times I think April Fools Day is a thing remembered only in magazines and newspapers. Why, when I was a young girl, it was a normal thing for people to try to play harmless tricks on family, friends, and neighbors. Maybe it's just one of those things that has become politically incorrect. It seems we don't want to do anything even the least little bit out of the ordinary because it just might possibly offend someone. Grandma was listening to one of the satellite radio channels the other day, the one that covers old radio programs from the 30s, 40s and early 50s. After one of the shows

from the 40s, there was a public service announcement regarding the need for families to pray together, and for individuals to pray by themselves. Now, a bit more than sixty years later, we hardly even talk about it at all, and especially not in the mainstream media. Why, we wouldn't want to offend some atheist or some such, now would we? Ever notice they don't mind insisting on talking up their point of view whenever they can get some talk show host to interview them? And how they object to anyone who opposes their view from speaking out! Of course, it seems like there's always some one with really thin skin around just waiting for someone to offend them, and cause them 'untold grief, pain, and suffering' and whatever else their lawyer can dream up for the inside of a courtroom.



Sometimes I'm glad I'm getting older. People just expect us old folks to be outspoken and 'speak our minds'. And with so many of us old folks around and now being in the majority, maybe it's time we used some common sense and spoke out against this political correctness thing. I'm not saying we should just go around insulting everyone we disagree with, or don't like, but why can't we just say what's real and right for a change? After all, what is wrong with the truth?



MNE

ARRL FIELD DAY - 2011

June 25-26

ALWAYS HELD THE FOURTH FULL WEEKEND IN JUNE!

For more information download the PDF file from the ARRL website at

http://www.arrl.org/files/file/Field-Day/2011/2011_FD_Packet.pdf

CULTURED CORNER

by ANØNMS

THE FIRST OF APRIL

*The first of April,
some do say,
is set apart
for All Fools' Day.
But why the people
call it so,
nor I, nor they
themselves do know.
But on this day
are people sent
on purpose for
pure merriment."*

-Poor Robin's Almanac (1790)-

TECH STUFF

By VE1VQ

PART 2 - WHAT PEOPLE HAVE FOR ANTENNAS AND RIGS

This is a continuation of last month's column, in which others shared what they have for equipment in their shacks or hanging outside. All have commercial rigs. Some have commercial antennas while others have home brew radiators. Some are restricted by space and land use covenants, while others have wide open spaces. All are striving to do the best with what they have.

Dan KE4JSX

My main rig is a IC-756-ProII with an additional tuner (MFJ949) if needed. My backup rig is an IC-735.



My antenna is an 80m Delta loop that, so far, has gone undetected by the XYL. I also have an 80m inverted-V up and ready - gotta love that loop, tho'. The power supply is an Antron 35a w/ 4 deep cycles on standby w/ trickle chargers. The solar panels are still boxed up and waiting to play.

For higher frequencies I have a Kenwood TM733a dual band (440 side not used much - keep sheriff's dept freq on that side). Police scanner on top and always on.....

1/2 dozen or so FRS radios and a couple of CB's tucked away. In the truck there is an IC V8000 for two meters along with a police scanner.

My "traveling" go bag has a Yaesu VX7R with spare battery packs.

Other HTs : HTX 202 and IC T2H sport (AA version) NOAA wx radio with SAME is always on at home and work (sent us to the basement twice for tornado warnings in our county - even have a hand held for traveling. Experience has been a harsh teacher :)

Assorted coax, wire, small 2 meter beam and spare 4:1 balun - plan to lay a loop on the stake building roof to see how it does.....

Most of my gear is in metal boxes/cabinets in a poor attempt at a Faraday cage. I need to get better about disconnecting and getting around to grounding the boxes... one day...

Don N5KXF

I wanted everything I have to be small and portable... IC-706, IC-7000, three IC-V8000, IC-209, two YAESU FT-60, three marine batteries, many wire antennas and military fiberglass portable push poles. Also a lot of coax of different sizes.



Ted N4TW

My HF rig is a Kenwood TS-570D. It's a really good rig, and I like it a lot.

Dislikes:

1. The DSP noise reduction in the AF chain. It makes a rushing sound that is at least as distracting, loud, and/or annoying as the noise I'm trying to reduce.

2. The location of the AF gain control. It is in the center of the right-hand column of front-panel controls.

ATTENTION ALL MANUFACTURERS: The AF Gain control goes on the LOWER RIGHT CORNER of the front panel! Always! Nowhere else! Nothing else belongs there!



Likes:

1. While it isn't as small as an IC-706 or an FT-857, it's still compact, with a large enough front panel for me to see the buttons and knobs and their legends, and to operate them easily and effectively.
2. The 400-Hz CW filter I bought for it was a great investment in CW receiving comfort and effectiveness.
3. It was relatively easy to set up for 60-meter operation.
4. The readability of the main display (frequency, mode, etc.) is excellent.
5. I get nice audio reports on it when I'm using my D-104 mic.

Philippe VA2PHI

I use a Yaesu FT-897 transceiver and an inverted-V 80-40m antenna with coax traps and sometimes I use a Clipperton-L linear amplifier.



You will find all details about the antenna on the website at http://www.ve2ums.ca/chasse/Serge/Atelier/Projets/Trappes/anglais/antenne2_ang.htm and the coax traps at http://www.ve2ums.ca/chasse/Serge/Atelier/Projets/Trappes/anglais/trappes_40m_ang.htm

You will find my homemade linear amplifier at http://www.ve2ums.ca/chasse/Serge/Atelier/Projets/Membres/VA2PHI/va2phi_ang_ampli.htm and my log periodic antennas, VHF/UHF and HF at http://www.ve2ums.ca/chasse/Serge/Atelier/Projets/Membres/VA2PHI/va2phi_ang_antennes.htm

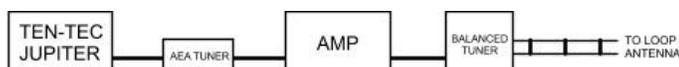
Dave VE1VQ

My station consists of a Ten-Tec Jupiter and a 500' loop antenna fed with [home-brew open wire transmission line](#). I have a DENTRON



Cliperton-L amplifier that Art, W1OND (SK), picked up for me from a retired Catholic priest who caused interference whenever he tried to use it at the retirement home where he lived. The only time I use the amplifier is for the 75 meter MARA nets.

Over the years I've tried an inverted-L, a long wire, various dipoles, and an inverted-V or two. I had a 1000' horizontal loop at one time but it turned out to be not as good as the half size (500') one I'm currently using.



The Clipperton-L amplifier has an untuned input so I use a low power tuner to match the transceiver to the amplifier. The [balanced tuner](#) is from a design by AG6K. His was a thing of art, while mine is built on a piece of 3/4 inch plywood screwed to the wall over the gear.

Modeling the larger one on the computer showed that it had a bit of a null to the south southwest, toward the rest of MARA NE whereas the smaller has a bit of gain in the desired direction.

My current total VHF equipment is an ICOM IC-2H hand held. My Honda FIT did not allow for much in the way of mobile radio. Having recently moved up to a Honda CR-V opens up some possibilities!

I have capability for PSK-31 and other digital modes if anybody ever wants to play. I haven't been on the air with any of them for some time but I guess I could find the cables and reconnect the laptop. I built my first [interface box](#) and used it for several years, then broke down and went [commercial](#) with a Signalink box. Like a lot of the gear I've had over the years, the fun and excitement for me is in getting it to work in the first place. After that, I figure anybody can operate it.

So there you have it! Information from those who responded, over the period of several months, to my question about what they used for equipment and antennas.

MNE

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"A common mistake that people make when trying to design something completely foolproof is to underestimate the ingenuity of complete fools."

~Douglas Adams

GOT SOMETHING YOU CARE TO SHARE?

Have something you want to share? A construction project, pictures of your station... home or mobile, a station installation at the chapel, or Field Day, a trip in the woods or some remote location with your portable rig, or maybe an antenna in your back yard. Whatever it is, share it with us. Send it to VE1VQ@eastlink.ca

DI-DAH-DI-DAH^D

ANYTHING ON APRIL 1st IS SUSPECT!

Hoaxes, pranks, and April Fools Jokes pertaining to Amateur Radio are not easy to find on the internet. Must be we're a sober (meaning dull) bunch. Or perhaps we don't like talking about our being taken in by others. I did however manage to find this little gem.

By Dan KB6NU, in his Blog entry of April 1st, 2010
Originally from Jim, WB8AZP, via the ARROW mailing list:

Buried in the middle of the 1200-page Health Care Reform package is something that should be disturbing to all US amateur radio operators. Embedded in the funding guidelines section 415, paragraph 27, line 45, are details on one of the mechanisms that the government intends to employ to help pay for the staggering costs of the new plan.

To put it simply, the new health care guidelines support the notion of creative funding from untapped resources, and from other government agencies, like the FCC. This puts the burden on funding on other agencies, and therefore the health care reform pundits can claim that "they" didn't introduce any new taxes to pay for everything.

Lurking in the depths of the new health care package is a time bomb waiting to affect all US Amateur Radio Operators; The new Talk And Pay (TAP) Tax.. What does the TAP Tax do? Well, just as it implies, it adds a tax on to each amateur license, based on usage of the bands.

The FCC knew it was going to be troublesome to enforce this kind of regulation, so they came up with a clever scheme – taxation by license class. All Technician, General, and Extra Class Licensees will be taxed at a different rate. Any holdover licenses from different classes will be taxed at the next higher rate, so novice license holders will be taxed as technicians, advanced holders as extra class licensees and so on. The logic is that higher class licenses can use more of the frequencies; therefore they pay a larger percentage. There are even paragraphs that define taxing stations that haven't operated, (although you have to prove that by filing a waiver), stations where the license holder has become a silent key (a different waiver), and repeater or space stations (when the license is held by a non-profit group, you

can apply for a waiver as well). The legislators have even thought of the mechanism to capture revenue from youngsters, in their special Tax On Eventual Earnings (TOE) tax. So, a youngster who is not working will pay into a TOE TAP TAX account, in the form of a debit owed to the government. Even retirees do not escape this tax, as there is a provision for the SNAP TAP TAX (Sure Not Accounting for Productivity).

There does seem to be a provision for testing down to a previous license class, so you can get a tax break by forfeiting your current license class, (after taking a new 50 question written exam, and paying a hefty 45 dollar examination fee). You'll be then required to sign BCKTP in CW or "slash Back Tap" in voice.

This looks to be pretty well thought out. I stopped reading after seeing the FCC amateur radio entry. It appears that Cell phones and wireless data networks will be next. There are 20 other government agencies listed in the document. Where will this insanity end? All of this is scheduled to go into effect on April 1, 2011, because there apparently wasn't enough time to implement it before then.

If this doesn't negatively impact the growth of amateur radio, I don't know what will! I think it will also promote the notion of going really underground, and not using your callsign at all., actually a practice that I've already heard lots of people adopt, especially on VHF.

I called my congressman after reading all of this, and he said that there are already proposals being filed to allow credit for amateur radio operators involved in public service, and he called it the Support for Individuals Desiring to Engage in Services Training, Education, and Planning (SIDESTEP). That makes me feel a little better.

I think it just might be time to get rid of my gear, before all this TOE TAP, SNAP TAP, BACK TAP, and SIDESTEP stuff goes into affect. Once again, the government is here to help you."

We can laugh when we read this from this side, but in line with things government on both sides of the border have tried in the past and are likely considering now or will be in the future, is it really that farfetched?

Until next month,
VE1VQ