

# The NEWSLETTER

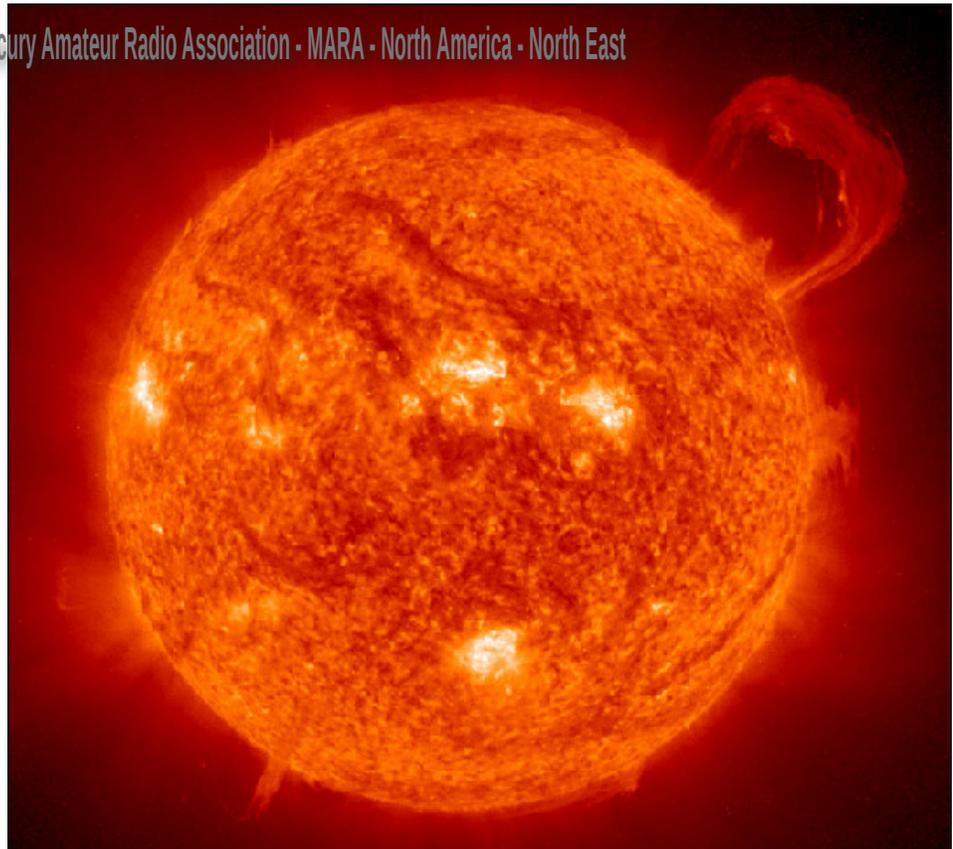
JULY/AUGUST 2011 VOLUME 11, No. 7

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

**BLAME IT ON THE SUN-  
SPOTS.**

**DOESN'T MATTER WHAT.**

**GLOBAL WARMING, POOR  
RADIO COMMUNICA-  
TIONS, WEIRD WEATHER  
PATTERNS, COMPUTER  
FAILURE, CREDIT CARD  
ERRORS, MISMATCHED  
SOCKS FROM THE DRYER,  
RED SOX NOT WINNING  
THE PENNANT...**



## CONTENTS

## OTHER STUFF

**2** ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES - 2011

**4** GRANDMA MARA'S RAMBLINGS  
RAMBLINGS OF AN OLDER PERSON - FIELD DAY IS FUN - AGAIN!

**5** CULTURED CORNER  
WHAT DID YOU DO ON FIELD DAY?

**5** TECH STUFF  
COPPER vs COPPERWELD!

**6** QUOTE OF THE MONTH  
DALLIN H. OAKS

**6** DI-DA-DI-DA-DIT  
WHERE HAVE ALL THE MEMBERS GONE?

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

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# ANNUAL MEETING

18 JUNE 2011

**T**he annual meeting of the Mercury Amateur Radio Association - NorthEast was held at the Nautilus Diner in Crofton, MD on the 18th of June 2011.

## Attending

Bruce Wortmann, N3IA President  
Steve Kelly, K2KEL VP  
Stan Staten, N3HS Treasurer  
Jeff Niceler, K3DEY Board Member  
Caryl Kelly, KC2QCL Board Member  
Charles Bruington, WB4FLM Board Member  
Chuck Moore, WD4HXG  
Dan Goodson, NE3Z, guest, (briefly, before being called away)

The opening Prayer was offered by Bruce Wortmann

The minutes of the 2010 meeting were not available for acceptance.

The Treasurer reported the Association funds total \$245.51. The Treasurer's report was accepted by voice vote.

The first topic was a discussion of how to move forward on changes to the Mara-NE Constitution and By-Laws. It was thought that the amendment rule would need to be suspended to carry the business with so few able to attend the annual meetings. This became unnecessary as the current constitution provides the means to amend through the use of proxies in the ratification process.

A lively discussion ensued regarding Resolution #1 and edits were made to the originally proposed resolution and are presented later in the minutes.

In order to proceed with the Membership business, it was determined that the correct course of action would be to suspend the "Membership" meeting and convene a meeting of the Board of Directors. The "Membership" meeting was duly suspended, for cause of voting resolution #2 and resolving the need to assess dues to expiring members present to retain membership status for the meeting and then refunding same if the resolution passed.

A meeting of the Board of Directors was convened. A quorum consisting of Jeff, Charlie, and Caryl was present.

Resolution #2 was discussed and voted unanimously in

the affirmative.

The resolution eliminates the annual \$5 dues (or more particularly sets the dues at \$0) without modifying Article 5 of the MARA-NE Constitution and provides for mechanisms required to manage the Association.

The Board meeting was then suspended and the Membership meeting resumed.

## Board Elections

Stan Staten, N3HS was elected to a 6 year term, replacing Diana Taggart.

Charles Bruington, WB4FLM was re-elected to another 6 year term.

It was determined that Caryl Kelly, KC2QCL had, last year, been elected to fill a remaining 3 year term. Chuck Moore was conditionally elected to the 2 year remainder of a vacant Board position.

[I have since reviewed the minutes of the 2010 meeting and discovered that "To fill the position left vacant by Shirrel Young (N3DIX/SK), expiring in 2013 – Mike Dirlle was duly nominated, seconded and elected. To fill the vacant position expiring in 2013 – Caryl Kelly was duly nominated, seconded and elected."] My sincere apology to Chuck for my inept management.

The membership voted to accept the modified Resolution #1 and have the amendment presented to the general membership for a vote at next year's meeting.

The membership also presented a resolution of commendation to Dave Marling, VE1VQ for being the glue which has held the Association together and provided tireless service in the production of the monthly news letter. The resolution was passed by enthusiastic voice vote.

The membership meeting was then adjourned, and the Board meeting resumed.

## Election of Officers

The board re-elected Bruce Wortmann, N3IA as President, and Dave Marling, VE1VQ as secretary. The Board also voted, conditional on his acceptance, the election of

**“The resolution eliminates the annual \$5 dues (or more particularly sets the dues at \$0)...”**

Dave Marling as Treasurer, as the resolution provides no Treasurer action and Stan had, last year, requested not to be re-elected.

### Acceptance of new members

Memberships were accepted from Michael Hall KJ3HAL and Robert Lucas W4WBG

### Next year's annual meeting

The 2012 annual meeting was discussed and the suggestions included: Stan's place or a historic site (a ship or fort, etc.). No location was selected but it was decided it needed to be chosen and announced by 1/1/2012.

The Board meeting was adjourned and the closing prayer was offered by Steve Kelly.

We, the Membership, wishing to secure for ourselves the pleasures and benefits of an association of persons in the LDS Church or otherwise commonly interested in Amateur Radio and in developing and maintaining emergency communications skills, constitute ourselves the Northeast Mercury Amateur Radio Association (hereafter known as "the club") and enact this constitution as our governing law. It shall be our purpose to further the exchange of information and cooperation between members; to promote radio knowledge, fraternalism and individual operating efficiency; to conduct programs and activities to advance use of Amateur Radio for emergency communications; and to provide training, support and encouragement for those who would serve in emergency communications.

Therefore further, be it resolved that the MARA-NE constitution "Article I – Membership" be amended as follows:



Prior to the annual meeting several members gathered at the radio room in the DC Bishop's Storehouse. From left to right - Charlie WB4FLM, Bruce N3IA, Caryl KC2QCL, Jeff K3DEY, Steve K2KEL, and Frank KB3PDT. Photo by Dan NE3Z

### RESOLUTION #1

Whereas the membership of MARA-NE desire to retain our mutual association as church members, and

Whereas no direct relationship should be purported or implied that MARA-NE has a direct support role for the LDS Church,

Therefore, be it resolved that the MARA-NE constitution Preamble be amended as follows:

All persons interested in providing emergency communication services by Amateur Radio shall be eligible for membership. Membership shall be by application and election upon such terms as the club shall provide in its By-laws.

Approved for Presentation to the Membership 6/18/2011

### RESOLUTION #2

Whereas, the membership of MARA-NE desire to

simplify the operation of the club, and

Whereas the Club incurs no regular expenses, and

Whereas, the Club still requires a mechanism for maintaining a membership roster.

Therefore, be it resolved to eliminate the current \$5 per year dues and further, therefore empower the Secretary to annually pole, by mail or electronic means, the then current club members, prior to the regular meeting or regular meeting of the Board of Directors, and thereby ascertain the desire of the club member to retain membership.

Therefore further, resolve to empower the Board of Directors to make a request for voluntary donation from the membership to cover any ad hoc expense.

Therefore further, resolve to empower the treasurer to determine from any member currently with dues paid into the future, their desire to be refunded or the club retain the said future dues funds and document and as requested refund such dues.

Approved by Board vote 6/18/2011

### **RESOLUTION #3**

Whereas, the membership of MARA-NE desire to express appreciation for service rendered and

Whereas Dave Marling, VE1VQ, is a Charter Member of the Mercury Amateur Radio Association – North East, and

Whereas he has served as a faithful and devoted officer of the club, and

Whereas he has tirelessly produced the monthly newsletter to these many years, and

Whereas he has maintained regular radio contact with the membership through the Saturday morning net (as such propagation and noise conditions permit) and

Whereas he has to the best of his ability attended meeting of the club at great distance from his home QTH.

Now therefore: Be it resolved by this special commendation the membership, in the highest terms and with great appreciation hereby bestow the title of “Chapter Glue” upon Dave Marling, VE1VQ as the key element which holds our association together.

Approved by voice vote of the membership this 18th Day of June, Two Thousand Eleven.

## *Grandma Mara's* RAMBLINGS

Grandma wasn't planning on doing anything for Field Day this year. My bones have been telling me that I'm a little too old to stay awake and operate for the entire weekend, getting carpal tunnel pain from using a key or losing my voice for a week gabbing into a mic. Years ago, some other lady hams and I would plan all year long for that weekend in June. Some of them now are silent keys, others have moved away, and still others have let their licenses lapse as other interests took over. I hadn't even thought much about Field Day weekend until I heard Wendy and Walter talking about it one evening early in June on the local two meter repeater, the one that Walter maintains.

Walter sometimes signed on for the CW side of the local club effort with their multiple transmitters and antennas. Schedules were drawn up with club members working in shifts every hour of the on-air time. Only the best ops were assigned to the rotation, leaving those who were new or not as practiced, with nowhere to go except the novice station. It was tucked out of the way in a back corner of the lot with an afterthought for an antenna and rig, so the 'real hams' could do 'the serious operating'. Never said in so many words but certainly implied by the lack of emphasis.

For several years running I was invited as the token YL for the SSB side. There is something about a woman's voice on the air that works as a multiplier, getting through when a male wouldn't. The other station would often come back with, "QRZ the YL", or "CQ the YL"! But after a few years of operating with the 'gals' I didn't bother with the club as they had become way too competitive for my liking.

So the short of it was that Wendy, Walter, and I got together for Field Day. We set up Walter's RV in the nearby state park. One of the park rangers is a ham so getting a site with good sized trees was not a problem. Walter provided a [trapped antenna](#) of the same design as Wendy's. She brought her TenTec Jupiter, and I brought the food. What's a Field Day without food!

Wendy's father and her brother came to help us get the antenna up. This time it was easier than it had been installing hers at home as there was room to make a sloping V. And since Walter had built it at home after helping Wendy construct hers, there had been time to adjust the wire lengths and tune it up. A few tries with a slingshot, a

spinning reel and a fishing weight had the single support line in place over a nice pine.

Walter fired up the RV's generator and powered on the gear. After a few tests and a few minor adjustments we were ready to go.

And 'go' we went! We had so much fun operating when we felt like it. At night when we weren't operating Walter let us stay in the RV while he went home to his place. Wendy operated both CW and SSB late into the night and again very early in the morning.

Wendy's brother and dad spent a fair amount of daylight hours observing and operating voice under her watchful eye. Seeing all of this brought back a lot of memories of Field Days with my father when I was her age.

The best thing was - my bones didn't protest much at all! Already thinking about doing this again next year.

*You think gives you the right to brag.*

*And when the time was over  
And everything put away  
Now's the time to start again  
To plan for next year's Field Day.*

*Did you have fun on Field Day?  
That's why you do what you did.  
Otherwise why even do it  
Better stay home with the kids.*

## CULTURED CORNER

by ANØNMS

*What did you do on Field Day?  
What did you do just for fun?  
Did you help raise antennas  
Working out there in the sun?*

*Did you help with the planning?  
Did you help with the gear?  
Did you do all the cooking?  
Perhaps you brought the root beer?*

*Did you operate seriously  
Striving to be number one?  
Did you log all your contacts  
Or did you just do it for fun?*

*Did you operate multi-multi  
Or alone in your tent in the dark?  
Did serious planning go in it  
Or a last minute thing as a lark?*

*When the last contact was finished  
The hum of the generator died,  
Nothing to do but re-hash  
Telling those little white lies.*

*'Bout how you captured the rare one  
That nobody else could snag  
Through all those other strong stations*

## TECH STUFF

By VE1VQ

Last month's TECH STUFF column covered the most commonly used antenna materials. This month we will take another look at copper vs copperweld.

### COPPER

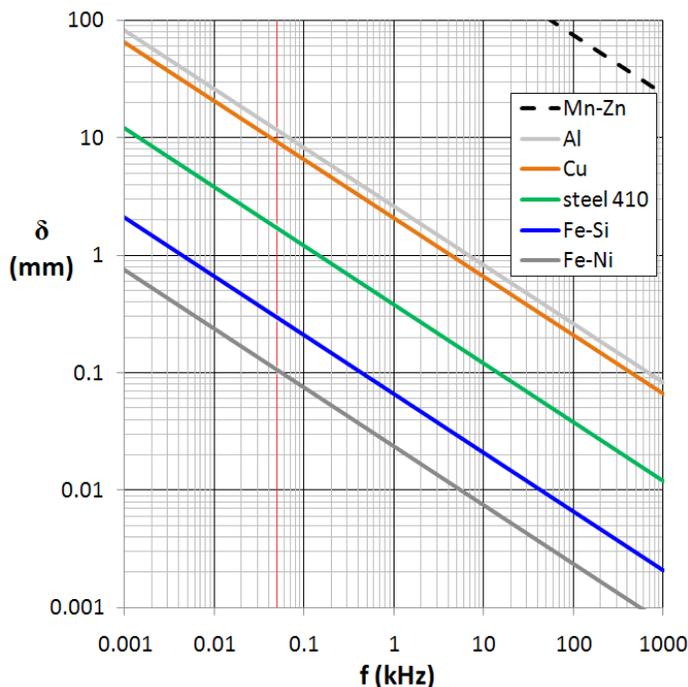
Copper has been the main choice for the building of wire antennas by discriminating hams for many years. Until fairly recently, it was relatively inexpensive. Now it seems that you almost have to check your bank account balance before taking that roll of wire out of the store.

Recycled copper prices have increased in step as well, such that copper water pipe has been stolen from local community and fire halls in my area. Break-ins to the electric power company's sub-stations in attempts to steal copper power busses is not an uncommon event.

I found several reports on-line about thefts from commercial radio transmitter sites<sup>1, 2</sup> and one from a ham<sup>3</sup>. If copper prices continue to rise, I'm sure there will be more.

In its stranded form, copper is fairly resistant to stretching, work hardening, and breaking. Using a single strand of copper for a resonant antenna such as a dipole fed with coaxial cable means a constant shortening to maintain resonance of the wires as they stretch.

One of the properties of transmitting an AC (alternating current) signal over a wire is something known as 'skin effect' where the current density is greatest along the outer surface of the wire, decreasing as the depth increases (whether solid or stranded). The higher the frequency, the closer to the surface the current travels. With DC (direct current), the current passing through the wire is evenly distributed over the cross section of the wire (i.e. the



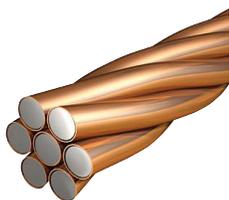
Skin effect with different metals at frequencies up to 1000 kHz or 1 MHz (WIKIPEDIA.COM)

entire wire gets used, not just the surface portion).

If the density of the AC current is greater nearest the surface and less so towards the center, why not do away with the center? Not so easy in practice to hollow out a #14 copper wire! The solution - enter the COPPERWELD.

### COPPERWELD

Remember that with COPPERWELD, a thin layer of copper is placed over a steel core, creating a sort of virtual copper tube. Steel being stronger than copper, COPPERWELD is therefore much stronger than the equivalent size in hard drawn copper. Anyone contemplating large dipoles, long wires, or loops would be wise to go with this product. Pricing shown on the [WIREMAN](#) site is about the same for both.



Wire Clamp

COPPERWELD is a **lot** harder to bend than copper, and next to impossible to wrap around itself as at the end of a dipole insulator, so it would be advisable to use wire clamps. Gloves and safety glasses are **strongly recommended** to protect your hands and eyes as this stuff has a springiness that is hard to believe unless you've worked with it before. Making electrical connection by soldering is

easy enough to do providing you have a soldering gun or iron with sufficient heat reserve. Should your gun/iron not be up to the job cold solder joints will result. For most antennas, 18AWG size wire will be more than sufficient. If you have the space and can put up a huge loop of the 1500 foot variety, then move up to 14AWG for the extra strength.

<sup>1</sup> <http://antennablog.lbagroup.com/another-day-another-radio-station-copper-theft/>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.ultimateconroe.com/stories/3046-detectives-look-for-tips-in-copper-wire-theft>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.cqhq.co.uk/2011/02/copper-theives.html>

## QUOTE OF THE MONTH

*Let us remember that desires dictate our priorities, priorities shape our choices, and choices determine our actions.*

- Dallin H Oaks

## DI-DAH-DI-DAH!

I wasn't able to make this year's MARA NE annual meeting - again! Drat! - because I really enjoy each and every annual meeting I've ever been able to attend. Sunday the 19th, the day after this year's annual, I find an e-mail from Chuck WD4HXG, with a link to an article in the September 2, 1989 Church News entitled ['Voice friends' meet at radio convention](#).

"From as far away as Australia, Western Samoa and Canada, 370 Church members and others interested in sharing a common interest in amateur (ham) radio and public service gathered recently at the Bountiful Utah Val Verda Stake center for the third Mercury Amateur Radio Association (MARA) world convention."

Three hundred and seventy! Can you imagine that many LDS people with the common interest of ham radio together in one room! And we think we're doing exceptionally well to have a dozen at one of our annuals.

The article goes on to say that at that time, MARA had a **membership of more than three thousand, five hundred (3500) persons worldwide**. If you have your calculator handy, you'll see that a little better than ten per cent of the worldwide membership came from near and far to attend this conference. That must have been something to see and experience!

I didn't find out about MARA until the early '90s. I'd been a ham for better than twenty-five years at that point, and LDS for only slightly less than that.

So where are all of these 3500 plus members now? By this time and number of years later obviously some of them are silent keys, some have lost interest in MARA, and some are inactive either from ham radio or Church or both. What about the remainder? There must still be a good sized number of LDS hams around!

I'd like to see those numbers happen again, so we could be a group that large in number, able to provide both a social function and a body capable of training emergency communicators, available when the need arises, throughout the world.

If you know someone in your ward or branch, or your town, or maybe even the other side of the planet, who used to belong to MARA, make contact with them, perhaps invite them to take a look at the [MARA NE website](#) or sign up for the [e-mail reflector](#). It would be interesting to bring a large group of like-minded people together again if only by the virtual means of the internet.

Until September,  
VE1VQ

## GOT SOMETHING YOU CARE TO SHARE?

A construction project, pictures of your station... home or mobile; a Field Day station at the chapel or elsewhere, a trip in the woods or some remote location with a portable rig, or maybe an antenna in your backyard. Whatever it is, share it with us. Send it to one of the e-mail addresses shown on page 1.