

Muncie Area Amateur Radio Club

P.O. Box 1441
Muncie, IN 47308



The MAARC Exciter

Volume VI, Issue IV

April 2005

MAARC Officers:

- President:
Joshua Beeson, N9GQA
N9gqa@arrl.net
- Vice President:
Gary Lee, KB9ZUV
- Secretary:
David Doiron, WA1MKE
ddoiron@bsu.edu
- Treasurer:
Jeff Cox, KA9HIJ
jbn5705@comcast.net
- Station Trustee:
Sonny McCoy, WA9DOL

Membership Information:

Membership in the Muncie Area Amateur Radio Club (MAARC) is open to all Amateurs. Applications should be submitted to the club secretary. The purpose of MAARC is to bring together, for their mutual benefit, persons interested in the various areas of the Amateur Radio Service. Any interested person is cordially invited to attend one or more of our regularly scheduled meetings. We meet on the third Sunday of the month at the Marin-Hunt school library in Muncie at 2 PM. This month's meeting will be April 17, 2005.

Please send general club correspondence to:

MAARC president
PO Box 1441
Muncie, IN 47308

146.85 Repeater Under New Management

The 146.850 repeater is now under new management. Don, K1FZY and I purchased it last month, after exploring several other options.

The offer to sell was first made last year, and we didn't see any reason to go through another season with this machine sitting more or less unmaintained.

The machine has had a full overhaul. Tim from TNT Communications has realigned the receiver and transmitter, and donated a nice power amplifier.

There is evidence that water has leaked into the cabinet for some time, and this is interesting with regard to the "horrible noise" interference that the 73 machine has had over the last few years, in wet weather. I think whatever was happening may have been in that mobile amp, but of course we will be watching it very closely.

We are also investigating a new site, which will move the 85 a few miles away, which can only help any such problems, as well as reduce the chance that all three ham repeater sites in town could be taken out by one tornado or severe storm. The normal track for severe weather would draw a straight line through Ball hospital, Teacher's College, and the architecture building, where the 85 now resides. With the new site, we would be immune to such a "triple-play".

The machine will operate similarly to the 146.73 machine in that it will accept, but not require, PL on the input, and will encode PL on the output. Later, we will transition to PL access. The tone is of course, 127.3 per the IRCC plan for this area.

Also, the 85 now has backup power, and has had a full rewiring job with all new DC and RF cables. The old brittle DC wiring has been upgraded and Powerpoled, and the "no-name" RF cables have been replaced

(Continued on page 3)

The President's Corner



Josh Beeson, N9GQA
President

IMPORTANT NOTICE TO ALL VOTING MEMBERS!

A vote to determine whether Sonny McCoy, WA9DOL, our present Trustee, will be removed from office will be conducted at the April 2005 regular meeting.

A motion was made by Dave, KC6ETE, and seconded by Don, K1FZY, at the March 2005 meeting, to remove WA9DOL from office under Article VII (6) of the MAARC constitution. The voting procedure is governed by Article VI (1) of the MAARC constitution. It is expected that the proponents of this motion and Sonny, WA9DOL will make presentations as to why the motion should or should not pass.

This is an important vote so please try to attend this meeting.

Dave Doiron, WA1MKE
MAARC Secretary

Greetings to my fellow club members. I hope everyone has been enjoying this warmer spring weather.

The new antenna for the 440 machine and the APRS digi-peater has been put up. Thanks to Dave, WA1MKE, and Jordan, K9NZF, for their assistance in getting the job done.

I hope everyone is thinking about safety while they are adding new antennas at their home stations. Unfortunately, every year we lose Hams because they

make unsafe decisions while maintaining or putting up new antennas. SO please make sure you do your work safely this year.

It is almost time for the Dayton Hamvention 2005, so start saving your pennies! I hope everyone can make the meeting this month and I look forward to seeing everyone then.

73's, Josh, N9GQA

How to Operate a Radio

(adapted from "How to Operate a Scanner" by Jim Springer)

In this world of complexity and semi-intelligent radios and operators, we are often confronted with vexing situations of electronic recalcitrance. The following six steps are virtually guaranteed to solve almost any radio-related problem you may encounter, whether you realize it or not.

Step One - Approach the radio in a confident manner. This will give it the (frequently mistaken) idea that you know what you are doing.

This will also impress anyone who happens to be looking over your shoulder and if the radio suddenly starts working, you will be credited with it. If this step fails, proceed to Step Two.

Step Two - Wave the manual at the radio. This will show everyone, and perhaps the radio, that you are at least somewhat familiar with the sources of knowledge. You will no doubt have to proceed to Step Three.

Step Three - In a forcible manner, recite Ohm's Law directly at the front panel. (Before you do this, refer to an old Handbook to be sure you still remember what Ohm's Law is for.) This may be a traumatic experience for most Extra Class hams, for both you and the radio, and should only be attempted after the first two steps fail.

Step Four - Perform "percussive

(Continued on page 4)

Editor's Notes

Welcome to the April edition of the MAARC Exciter. My lead article is in the spirit of April 1 when I first saw it. Enjoy!

I joined Josh, N9GQA, on the roof of Teacher's College, as we repaired the cable used by the 440 and



Dave,
WA1MKE

APRS machines and replaced the antenna. The section of RG8X cable that goes through the "bolt hole" has been replaced by a section of Andrew FSJ1 heliax. The old line was definitely showing its age and exposure to the sun.

Jordan, K9NZF, arrived and helped us complete the project as he is light

enough to walk on the top roof! I think there's a message there for Josh and me!

Finally, I would like to suggest that we move our May meeting to May 15 rather than May 22. This is the third Sunday of the month but it is not the third weekend. The third weekend is the date of the 2005 Dayton Hamvention and I suspect a lot of us may not be able to make the meeting as we will be returning from Dayton (Including me!). We

(Continued on page 4)

(Continued from page 1)

with half-wavelength runs of LMR-400.

The old controller, similar to what the MAARC 444.375 machine uses, has been retired and replaced with a state of the art Arcom RC-210 controller, which will allow us to control two additional repeaters with interlinking in any combination, plus IRLP and a control link that meets the part 97 requirements.

We have also added a GAASFET receive preamp, and replaced the transmit amplifier, which was an old Daiwa mobile brick, not really suited to repeater service.

IRLP hardware is in hand, including a Linux system that is designed to run from 12VDC, so that the IRLP link can be maintained without AC power. IRLP setup is underway, but is rather more involved than Echolink, because of the secure, and encrypted communications that IRLP uses. IRLP is a "Ham only" network, unlike echolink.

The RC-210 controller, plus some bits

that I've picked up at hamfests along the years, allow us to read out battery voltage, receive signal strength, forward and reflected antenna power, and to set alarms that will alert us when one of these parameters goes outside settable limits.

The 85 machine remains open, and will continue to serve as a backup to the 73 machine during severe weather.

Don and I both feel that backup repeaters are nice, but in the end, they are a pile of expensive, and idle, equipment. A backup repeater that is not on the air, isn't doing much good. A second repeater with good coverage, accomplishes the same goal, with the advantage of being available for use the other 99% of the time as well.

- Dave Van Horn,
KC6ETE



(Continued from page 3)

would also have a chance to discuss travel plans to the Hamvention for those who may need to share a ride.

-73 - Dave, WA1MKE

P.S. Don't forget that there will be an important vote at the upcoming meeting so please try to attend. The details are elsewhere in this issue.

Technical Committee Members

WA9DOL - Sonny McCoy
Phone - (765) 284-3230

WA1MKE - Dave Doiron
Phone - (765) 358-3280
Email - ddoiron@bsu.edu

KC6ETE - Dave VanHorn
Phone - (765) 287-1987

N9RI - Bill Walker
Phone - (765) 286-7173
Email - N9RI@Yahoo.com

K1FZY - Don Van Horn
Phone - (765) 286-0470

The Spring Sprints Are Here!

Sprints are short duration contests. April is the time frame for the Spring Sprints - short duration competitions on the VHF bands. Here are the dates:

April 12 220 MHz

April 20 432 MHz

All start at 7PM local time. The exchange is your callsign and grid square. The 432 (includes 440!) sprint is the Wednesday after our meeting.

maintenance" by jarring the radio slightly. This may require anything from a three to six foot drop. Most repair shops prefer a concrete floor for this step. This is, of course, a drastic step and if it fails, you have no recourse other than to return it to the factory as "In Warranty", or, proceed to Step Five.

Step Five - Add at least one minor accessory to the power supply. This will put an added load on the unit and thereby increase your advantage over it. Should these five steps fail to work, you will have to proceed to six, the most drastic step of all, which is seldom used except as a final resort.

Step Six - THINK!

73, Ward N0AX

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

from The Contester's Rate Sheet

For Sale/Wanted:

This space is available to all members!

The price is right for your ad!

I have a collection of 5 ft to 15 ft sections of Andrew FSJ1 (1/4 in) heliax. No expensive connectors needed since a PL259 + RG59 sleeve works. \$0.60/ ft. I also have a *Greenlee* 1-1/8 inch radio chassis punch, \$10. Dave, WA1MKE, 358-3280

Do You have something for sale?

Your ad could be
here!

Please send your ad to me at

ddoiron@bsu.edu
By May 10, 2005