

The Minuteman

Newsletter of the Minuteman Repeater Association - February - March 1991
Volume 20 Number 4

The President's Corner

If you are wondering what happened to the newsletter, bear with me.....this is our first attempt at using PFS First Publisher to produce it. Hopefully we will get better at it. The PFS system has enough features so that we should be able to make it look better and better as time goes on.

A few notes about what has been going on...the new SCOM 7K controller is now operating up at 449.925. It has some truly powerful features. You will note that the patch is active on 925 now; for the time being, we are going to leave the '61 patch disabled, so when you are '61, use the 925 access code, and you will access the patch via the 440 repeater. The audio quality is much improved, and the controller will talk to you and tell you just what to do next. Take a look at Scott's contribution to this issue for more details about the controller and the autopatch.

For the first time our network of repeaters was used for a real emergency in January....you may remember hearing or reading about the gasoline spill that caused the City of Marlboro to evacuate a lot of families to two of the local shelter facilities. At about 1 AM or so, I got a call from Ned Fenstermacher, W1HGU, the Communications Chief for Marlboro Civil defense; he asked to have the MMRA repeaters allocated to CD use. So for about 7 hours, our system was in used by about 6 hams who were helping the City
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Renewal Reminder

Take a look at the mailing label on this newsletter - if you don't see 9109 (that's the year and month of expiration of your membership) on it anywhere, then you haven't renewed. A lot of good stuff is happening, and we don't want to lose you as a member. So toss a check in the mail to P.O. Box 2282, Lexington, Mass 99999. Hang in there with us!

Fleasale Results

Well, it snowed. It sleeted. It even rained a bit. By 0630 on the morning of January 12, we had somewhere around 8 inches of snow on the ground in Westboro. We had decided that too many people had planned to come and were pre-paid....so the show went on.

We had close to 65 tables reserved....and about 15 hardy souls showed up to sell their wares. About 100 people came through the doors to buy stuff. Strangely enough, most off the vendors told us that they did well enough to have made the trip worthwhile. We managed to finish the day with a loss of about \$127.

We are working toward a fall fleasale....more on that later in the year.

Meetings.....

Membership Meeting:

Monday, March 11 - Campion Center
Business, Social and Member Questions

Tech Committee Meeting:

Tuesday, March 19 - Campion Center
At Repeater Site

Tech Stuff.....by Scott Bullock, KA1CLX

Welcome to our newest column in the minuteman. In each newsletter, I will try to keep our members as well informed as possible on the latest technical advancements and new things to come with our repeaters.

First, the latest update on the Minuteman Network. In the third week of January a new SCOM 7k repeater controller was installed on 449.925. As many of you have already seen, this controller is very sophisticated and includes many features usually only found in controllers costing 2 to 3 times the price. More will follow in a future column about this controller.

After the controller was installed, a 6 meter frequency agile remote base was installed, enabling us to link to the World Network for civil defense checkins, or to any other 6 meter repeater within range.

As of this writing the link to 224.40 in Quincy is 90 percent complete and should be installed by the time you read this.

A new battery backup has been installed at 146.61, and the phone patch has been temporarily shut down because of problems with the patch hybrid and line. While the 61 patch is disabled, users can access the 449.925 patch via 61. The controller provides voice prompts telling you what to do. The patch on code is the same, but use the 449.925 autopatch disconnect code when on '61.

The Weston '82 repeater has been working very well since retuning the duplexors and

replacing a bad coax cable in the receiver and installing a new Spectrum Communications exciter. 224.70 has realized extended coverage with a new antenna installation.....the old antenna was junk. Also all cables and connectors have had a preventive maintenance check and everything is in good shape.

Our biggest problem in maintaining our repeater systems is manpower. I am forming a Technical Committee composed of people who are interested in contributing in any way to the maintenance of our repeaters. The first meeting will be on March 19, 1991, at the Weston Repeater Site at the Campion Center at 7 PM. If you would like to contribute your time and energy to maintaining repeaters and/or sites, COME ON DOWN! In addition to the technical aspects of system maintenance, there are jobs at several of our sites that need to be done this year, such as: recoating roofs, painting, etc. If you would like to donate a little bit of time and help, please call me at 508-872-4961 or come to the meeting.

We want to have the best, most reliable, state of the art repeaters in New England. It cannot be done by a few people, WE NEED YOUR HELP! 73'....Scott, KA1CLX.

Don't forget to check in to the Public Service Net on the first Monday of each month, 7 PM on '61, '82, '925, or '394

Minutes of MMRA Board of Directors Meeting
February 18, 1991

Present: Andy Morrison (N1BHI), Scott Bullock (KA1CLX),
Walter Ching (N1HBR), Mike Goldberg (N1DKZ), Al Kunian
(KA1AL), Ian MacLennan (AF1R), Grace Maglin (N1GZQ), Roy
Maglin (KC1VW), Ralph McNall (WB2DCL), Frank Morrison
(KB1FZ), Al Williams (KA6BUV). Guests: Don Breda.

Meeting was called to order by Andy Morrison (N1BHI) at 7:20 P.M.

1. Flea Market

Owing to the foul weather on the day of the Flea Market, the Flea Market resulted in a small net loss to the Association of \$127.61. The gross income was \$517.65, however the Association paid for a rental on a number of tables that went unused, for an extra school employee for snow removal, etc. Although this latter expenditure could possibly be disputed with Westboro High, Andy Morrison recommended to the Board that we let the matter drop in order to maintain good relations with them. The Board concurred unanimously.

Much of the credit for minimizing the loss to the Association goes to the food concession operated by Grace Maglin (N1GZQ). Thank you, Grace!

Ralph McNall (WB2DCL) will be pursuing the first or second Saturday or Sunday after Labor Day as a possible date for an additional 1991 Flea Market. Saturday has the advantage in that it calls for merely overtime rather than double time by the required police and school employees; Sunday, however, is easier to arrange in light of the school football schedule, and allows greater participation by vendors such as HRO and Rivendell.

Scott Bullock (KA1CLX) suggested moving the January Flea Market nearer the end of the month. This should still allow a long enough interval before the Marlboro Flea Market in mid-February. In any case, we will plan for an alternate, "snow" date.

Andy sought and received approval for a price break for the vendors who paid and showed up despite the bad weather. The exact nature of this break is to be determined. A possible suggestion was free space and 50% table discount at the next Flea Market.

2. Newsletter

Ralph McNall indicated that he will be unable to continue being responsible for the publishing of the Association newsletter.

Andy requested a volunteer to pick up this responsibility. The Association will be buying a copy of PFS:First Publisher to assist this volunteer in production. Until someone can be found to fulfill this role, Andy will be taking on the responsibility. Ralph also indicated that Al Medsker (WBOSQR) has gotten very busy and would probably like to be relieved as editor of the newsletter.

A possible change of the newsletter to a half-size format to simplify production by avoiding folding was suggested, and will be considered by Andy.

Frank Morrison (KB1FZ) asked when it might be appropriate to issue a new edition of the MMRA Operating Guide, which has become obsolescent since implementation of the networking plan has begun. It was the sense of the Board that final operating procedures for the network are still in flux, so it is probably too early to re-issue the Guide. In the interim, an errata and revision sheet will be prepared and distributed to new members with the copies of the existing guide.

Starting this month, an electronic copy of the MMRA Bulletin will be available on the Heath/Zenith BBS, as described in previous Board minutes.

3. Status of incorporation

Al Kunian (KA1AL) is currently pursuing this issue since the requisite vote was completed at the September meeting.

4. Public Service

The MMRA network was activated by local CD officials during a recent gas spill in Marlboro and performed very well despite a brief interference problem from Western Mass.

5. Repeater Topics

Andy presented a proposal to install a new 220 repeater at the same site as 449.925 (Sligo Hill in Marlboro) since the facilities are largely already in place. It was moved and seconded to accept this proposal. Carried unanimously by the Board.

There is still nonmember-owned 220/440 equipment at the Stoneham site. Mike Goldberg (N1DKZ) requested the owner to contact MMRA officers or the Board to discuss the issue. Since the owner has ignored this request, and since he does not have permission from our host to share our facilities, we will make a final attempt to contact him to resolve the problem. After that, Ralph proposed that we send formal notification to the nonmember that the Association plans an expansion requiring the

space occupied by his equipment, and that it must be removed by a given date.

There is still a serious intermod problem, believed to originate outside the machine, at .715 in Stoneham. Mike inquired about obtaining another frequency to eliminate the problem. Ralph suggested a temporary swap with another MMRA site. The .61 backup machine will be swapped in temporarily on an experimental basis to see if this successfully deals with the issue.

Scott indicated that the Arlington link is complete, tested, and working very well, less the crystals for the frequency requiring coordination. The .925 link to 6M link is also complete, working well, and temporarily linked into WorldNet.

Scott noted a problem with the external electrical service at .925, which, because of a combination of vines and ice, is hanging by the wires only. He urged that we either canvass the Association for a licensed electrician or go through a formal bid process and hire one to correct the problem. The materials -- new stanchion and new internal box, for example -- could either be purchased by MMRA directly, or through the electrician, whichever has the cost advantage. Grace and Roy Maglin indicated that they are acquainted with a ham electrician, and will be pursuing this issue.

In the meantime, Scott has rewired the interior of the building from 2-wire to 3-wire service, using conduits and generally better wiring practices. The old wiring was scorched in places and otherwise in generally poor condition.

The source of interference on .925 has been located and eliminated, with the cooperation of the owner.

Roy Maglin noted that some hams have been fined because of antennas on commercial towers that fail to comply with FCC and FAA illumination requirements. This is because all licensees sharing a tower are deemed to be at fault when this condition is detected by the FCC. Andy will review our installations to make certain that the MMRA is not at risk over this issue.

6. Beantown Parade

Grace Maglin requested volunteers for the Multiple Sclerosis Foundation "Beantown Parade" on April 7. This is an all-day event. Please contact Grace (N1GZQ) if you can donate some of your time.

Respectfully Submitted, Al Williams (KA6BUV) Clerk

The President's Corner (cont.)

marshal its resources to handle the evacuation. All three bands, 2 Meters, 220 and 440 were used.

Another new linking capability has allowed us to participate in another public service activity..... if you had been listening to '82, '61, 223.94 or 449.925 at 7 PM on the first Monday of this month, you would have heard the W1QJ World Net Monthly Public Service Net. During that 50 minute period, there were over 20 repeaters all simulcasting, providing walkie coverage over an area including almost all of Massachusetts, Southern New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Northeastern Connecticut and part of upstate New York. The power of that network to support an emergency communications situation is impressive. From now on, 7 PM on the first Monday of the month, we will be linked with World Net for about an hour.

Walter Ching, N1HBR, is the net control operator, and he will be soliciting checkins from hams who are interested in emergency or public service communications. We will keep track of those who check in consistently, and over time will build a list of public service minded MMRA members who can become the nucleus of an MMRA Emergency Communications group.

So No-Code is now a reality; the FCC set February 14 as the date for the beginning of issuance of the new codeless Technician Class license. I'd like to reiterate what I have said before - we must welcome the new licensees and integrate them into the

larger amateur community, making sure that they are exposed to an operating environment that will engender good practices and commitment to the betterment of the amateur radio service.

In his column in this issue, Scott makes a request for volunteers to help maintain our repeater systems. I would like to add something to that.... One of the key resources needed to do the kind of maintenance a sophisticated network of repeaters like ours requires is test equipment. We have of late been fortunate that Scott has access to an IFR 1500 service monitor, which has a combination scope and spectrum analyzer, frequency and deviation measurement along with other key functions.

The MMRA would benefit greatly if it had good test equipment, either in the form of a service monitor like the IFR, or separate pieces of gear providing the key functions. If any of you out there have access to a source of used test gear, or any ideas on how to get it cheap or even donated, let us know. We could make good use of it.

I'd like to close with thanks to the group who put out a lot of effort on the fleamarket: Roy and Grace Maglin, Scott Bullock, Barry Brozenski, Walter Ching, Ralph McNall, Ian MacLennan, Al Faul, Jed McGarry, Bob Gettys and perhaps one or two others I have left out. Should that be so, my abject apology for not including you in the list; but my appreciation is no less significant. Thank you all for showing on a bad day....

Membership Roster Update - Since December, New and Renewed Members

WBOSQR	Alan F. Medsker	Milford MA
N1AOP	Leo V. Sullivan, Jr.	Billerica MA
WA1AOS	Joe Passafiume	Stow MA
N1AVF	William A. Holbrook	West Roxbury MA
N1DM	Domenic M Mallozzi	Natick MA
N1EEN	Robert Dietrich	Acton MA
N1EUM	Kenneth Smith	Lynn MA
N1EWB	Edwin J. Kroeker	Hudson MA
WA1FNS	Ira Deutsch	Boston MA
N1FQN	Donald V. Gallahue	Framingham MA
N1FVU	Pam Morten	Lincoln Center MA
W1GE	Harold Ward	Bedford MA
WB1HAP	Gene L Piken	Medfield MA
KA1HNL	Trish Risley	Lincoln MA
NG1I	Frank MacKenzie-Lamb	Natick MA
N1IKW	Laurie Moskow	Groton MA
KA1JMF	John A. Morley	Billerica MA
KC1JY	Roger Hauck	Amherst NH
W1LMV	Richard C Bejtlich	Billerica MA
K1MCH	Glenn Gustavson	Lincoln Center MA
KA1PLY	Curtis Risley, Jr.	Lincoln MA
WA1RQF	William R. Armstrong	Northboro MA
W1UVE	A Stewart Johnson	Newton Upper Falls MA
NU1V	Eric E. Hahn	Hanover MA
KA1WCU	Roy A. Fowler	Woburn MA
KA1WRW	Carol Levine	Marlboro MA
W1YHY	Lance O Hobson	Holliston MA
WA2GFZ	Curtis Risley	Lincoln MA
K2GP	Gordon H. Piper	Needham MA
W2ILM	Paul S Zonderman	Schenectady NY
WA2IWC	Donald Breda	Holbrook MA
AI3E	Dwight Sipler	Stow MA
KA6BUV	Alfred E. Williams	Concord MA

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Repeater Information

Weston	146.82	KA1AL/R	PTL	P	
Marlboro	146.61	N1BHI/R	FTL	P	
Marlboro	449.925	KA1CLX/R	FTL	P	
Stonham	146.715	N1DKZ/R	PTL	P	(link not yet on)
Quincy	146.67	KC1VW/R	PTL	P	(link not yet on)
Quincy	224.40	KA1CLX/R	PTL		(link soon)
Weston	224.70	KA1AL/R	FTL		(patch via link)
Hopkinton	223.94	N1BHI/R	FTL		(patch via link)
Weston	442.??	KA1CLX/R	FTL		(awaiting coordination)(guest rptg)

FTL = Full Time Linked PTL = Part Time Linked P = Patch

Officers and Board of Directors

President:	Andy Morrison, N1BHI	508-481-3878
Vice President:	Vacant	
Secretary:	Frank Morrison, KB1FZ	508-443-6047
Treasurer:	Ian MacLennan, AF1R	
Clerk:	Al Williams, KA6BUV	
Directors:	Ralph McNall (WB2DCL), Al Kunian (KA1AL), Bill Hawley (KA1RVM), Walter Ching (N1HBR), Scott Bullock (KA1CLX)	
Tech Director:	Scott Bullock (KA1CLX)	508-872-4951
Newsletter Editor:	Al Medsker (WB0SQR)	

Meetings:

Membership : Second Monday of ODD numbered months, Campion Center, Weston
(September through May)

Board: Second Monday of EVEN numbered months. Meetings are open,
members welcome. If a visiting member wants to be on the
agenda, please contact Andy Morrison beforehand.

Membership is open to all radio amateurs; annual dues are \$25
for individual membership, \$35 for family membership.

Mailing Address: Minuteman Repeater Association
P. O. Box 2282, Lexington, Ma 02173