



# ZERO BEAT

Southeastern Massachusetts  
Amateur Radio Association, Inc.  
54 Donald Street  
South Dartmouth, MA 02748



OUR 66th YEAR

Volume 34, Issue 10



SEMARA



October 1998

## WCC - MARCONI'S WELLFLEET STATION

In the early part of this century, Marconi's station in Wellfleet broadcast messages to ships at sea. The historic station's call letters were WCC. One of the station's managers through the years was Irving Vermilya, WIZE, of Mattapoisett, a name familiar to old timers in the local area.

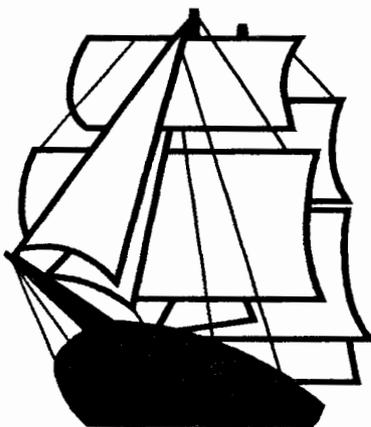
WCC transmitted 30 kilowatts of RF in the 1500 meter band (200 kilohertz). The antenna was a 50 wire fan shaped affair supported by four 210 foot towers. Antenna current was 50 amperes! The station required a tremendous counterpoise because of the poor, sandy soil conditions on Cape Cod.

The actual transmitter was a rotary spark gap affair. There was no commercial power within 25 miles of the site in those days, therefore all power required was generated on-site with a kerosene powered generator. When the station was on the air, the spark could be seen and heard up to a mile away! The transmitter was keyed by tape at about 16 words per minute. It is interesting to note that the keying was done on the high voltage secondary of the 50 kilowatt power transformer powering the transmitter. An air blast was used to extinguish the arc in the dual keying contacts.

The station went on the air at 10 pm each night. As the messages were transmitted to the ships, ships would confirm receipt of the messages on 600 meters (500 kilohertz). Such confirmation was relayed from ship to ship until it was received back at WCC. WCC would then remove that ships messages from the next transmission. The messages were transmitted three times per night, and operation usually ceased by 1 am.

WCC is long gone, having ceased operation before World War II. Unfortunately, over the years Mother Nature destroyed the actual site of the station through beach erosion.

(It should be noted that there also was a short wave station located in Marion, Massachusetts. It, however, used Alexander-son rotary transmitters instead of spark. But that's a story for an upcoming issue. Stay tuned!)



## MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

The September business meeting was called to order at 7:02 pm by President Rick Cabral, N1RFH. Twenty-three members were present. Following the salute to the flag and roll call, the Secretary's and Treasurer's reports were read and accepted.

Committee reports followed: *Technical* - Power amplifier installed on 2 meter repeater (80 watts). *Buildings and Grounds* - Need volunteers to cut grass. *Scholarship* - Papers being sent out to solicit applications for the scholarships. *Code Class* - Planning meetings being held. *Tower* - Committee working with Alan Costello of NETCOM in an effort to get a tower on our site.

*Communications* - Larry, AA1FS, noted that the September 5th VE session has been cancelled.

*Ratifications* - None

*Old Business* - Brad Anselmo, N1VUF talked about the upcoming radio classes and handed out brochures to all present. The brochures can be given to anyone interested in

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Published monthly by the  
Southeastern Massachusetts  
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54 Donald Street, PO Box 80007  
South Dartmouth, MA 02748

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### ADVERTISING

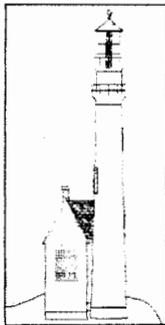
Commercial ads the size of a business card will be accepted. Rates are \$5.00 for one insertion, \$20.00 for six insertions, and \$35.00 for twelve insertions.

Non-commercial ads up to forty words in length will be accepted. Rate is \$3.00 for one or \$12.00 for six insertions. Club members have one free non-commercial ad per month.

## WORKING THE LIGHTHOUSES

On August 22 and 23 a Lighthouse Activity Weekend was held as previously announced in our August issue. Club member **Andy Reuter, WA1FNM**, worked several lighthouses taking part in the event.

Among the stations he worked were: W2GSA at the Twin Lights lighthouse, W2GSB at the Fire Island lighthouse, K2JXW/MM at the Cheasapeake Bay lighthouse, and K2AA on the lightship LV-79 in New Jersey.



The Lighthouse Activity Weekend is a "fun" event designed to promote awareness of lighthouses, lightships and amateur radio.

**MEETING-** continued from page one attending the classes, and they contain a form to send in for further information.

Preparations for the Fleamarket were discussed at length. Everything appears to be in order. The hat was passed for donations to purchase food for the event and \$168.00 was collected! It appears we will all eat well at the Fleamarket...

*New Business* - The following motion was made and approved by the membership: Motion to hold a 50/50 raffle following the meeting, with proceeds going into the fleamarket food fund.

Following the meeting, a 50/50 raffle to benefit the Fleamarket food fund was held. Bob Metivier, N1XZJ, was the winner. Since Bob donated his win to the food fund, the total of \$36.00 collected went into the food fund. Thanks Bob for the generous donation.

Finally, a mystery box of radio goodies donated by Samuel Wagstaff, N1PGN, was raffled off, and Bob Metivier, N1XZJ, was the successful bidder at \$12.00.



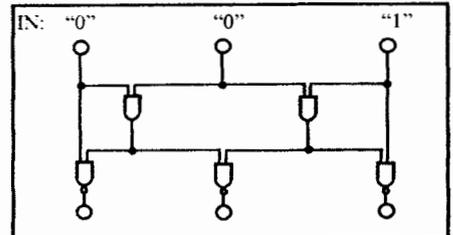
## NEXT SEMARA VE SESSION

November 7, 1998  
10:30 am  
SEMARA Clubhouse

## LOCAL VE SESSIONS IN OCTOBER

- 08 Providence, RI  
Judy Nelson  
401-231-9156
- 10 Falmouth, MA  
Joanne Reid  
508-548-11211
- 12 Brookline, MA  
Bob Wondolowski  
508-865-5822
- 20 Marlborough, MA  
William Wade  
781-891-9079
- 21 Cambridge, MA  
Nick Alterndburnd  
617-253-3776

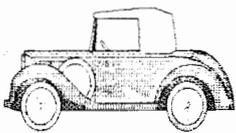
## WHAT'S THE OUTPUT?



- |        |        |
|--------|--------|
| 1. 000 | 5. 100 |
| 2. 001 | 6. 101 |
| 3. 010 | 7. 110 |
| 4. 011 | 8. 111 |

ANSWER - See Page 6

You never really learn to swear until you learn to drive!



## NOQUOCHOKE ORCHARDS

594 Drift Road, Westport, MA 02790  
(508) 636-2237



Apples - Pears - Peaches  
Sweet Apple Cider - Squash  
Westport Macomber Turnips  
Hay & Custom Work



# CLUB NOTES

October already! Where did the summer go? Two holidays this month: Columbus Day on the 12th and Halloween on the 31st. Don't forget to turn the clocks back one hour on Sunday morning the 25th when Daylight Saving Time ends.



Scott Szala, W1EV, was recently promoted to the rank of Sergeant with the Massachusetts State Police. Scott is active in our club as a VE examiner and member of the Tower Committee. Congratulations Scott!

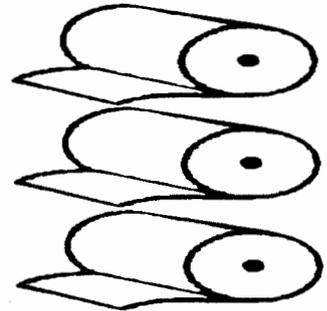


Oops! Another error! Hope this one didn't cause anyone too much grief. We got an E-Mail from Hank Riley, N1LTV, noting that his E-Mail address listed last month in Zero Beat's article on balloon launches was wrong. The correct address is:



n1lvt@amsat.org

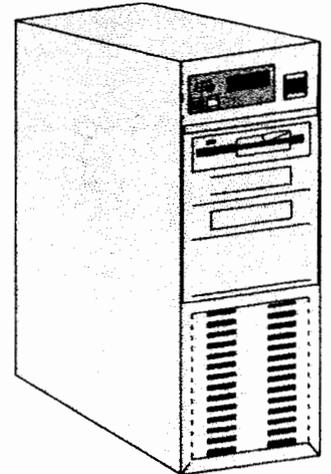
If you are looking for a way to help the club out with a little extra something, you might consider donating paper towels. There always is a need for more paper towels! We never seem to have enough. Please leave your donations on the kitchen counter.



Word on the street is that member Henry Blanchett, W1GYL, uses a scanner mounted inside a big metal box for Foxhunting. The box shields the scanner and permits sensitive signal level readings. Those that have seen the contraption say it looks like a giant Jack-in-the Box!

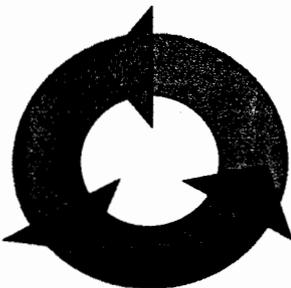


The September Tech-Talk was an overview of the Internet by Tim Smith, N1BTQ. Over 20 people attended! Tim explained the "nuts and bolts" about how the Internet works. He also showed pictures of various Internet sites he visited in his line of work. The pictures helped you get an idea of what makes up the Internet, and how complex it actually is. Thanks, Tim, for the great Tech-Talk!



## TIM SMITH, N1BTQ BREAKS FOXHUNT RECORD!

Tim Smith, N1BTQ, won the September foxhunt in the record breaking time of 10 minutes! (Several hunters noted the GPS setup and other "goodies" Tim had in his truck. However, Tim claims they had nothing to do with direction finding...) Tim bettered the previous record of 15 minutes held since last spring by Bill, WA1FYF. The former was last month's winner Steve Saunders, N1ZGX, with Nick riding along as sidekick. Boy did they pick a neat spot to hide! They had several hunters going in circles! Second place went to Henry, W1GYL; Third place to Chris, N1ZPI; Fourth to Ed, KA1AW & Bill, N1ETY & Kita; Fifth place to Marty, KA1YFV & Bill, WA1FYF; Sixth to Bill, K1IBR; and last but not least Seventh place to the "TEAM" of Manny, N1JVK, Rick, N1RFL, Ed, N1XTT, and Gil, N1MWG. The hunt was over by 8:00 pm thanks to the many hints that Steve, who was very hungry, gave out in the course of the evening. As usual, following the hunt the gang met at Friendly's in North Dartmouth for sandwiches, ice cream, and rag chewing.



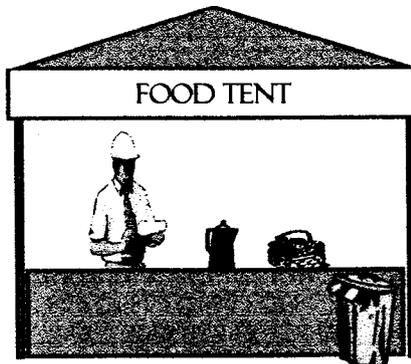
### SEMARA FLEAMARKET A GREAT SUCCESS!

The annual SEMARA Flea-market was held this year on September 13th at the clubhouse. Mother Nature cooperated by providing us with a fine day weatherwise. Fleamarket chairman **Andy Reuter, WA1FNM**, did a super job of pulling this year's event together.

The defining feature of this year's fleamarket was the amount of radio equipment donated by members for the club table. Actually, we had so much stuff that meeting hall chairs (three seats each) were set up in the yard to display the "goodies". The club treasury benefited greatly because of member donations. *Thank You* to all members that donated equipment, especially **Steve Spullock, N1DSN**, who donated several *car loads* of gear to the club.

As usual, the food tent was a very popular site. Thanks to the "Food Service Crew," plenty of tasty, mouthwatering, charcoal-grilled Hot Dogs, Hamburgers, and Linguica sandwiches were available.

The club ended up \$604.00 to the good, thanks to the hard work several members put into this event. **Thanks Fellows!**



### LMCC "BACKING OFF" TAKEOVER OF 440 BAND

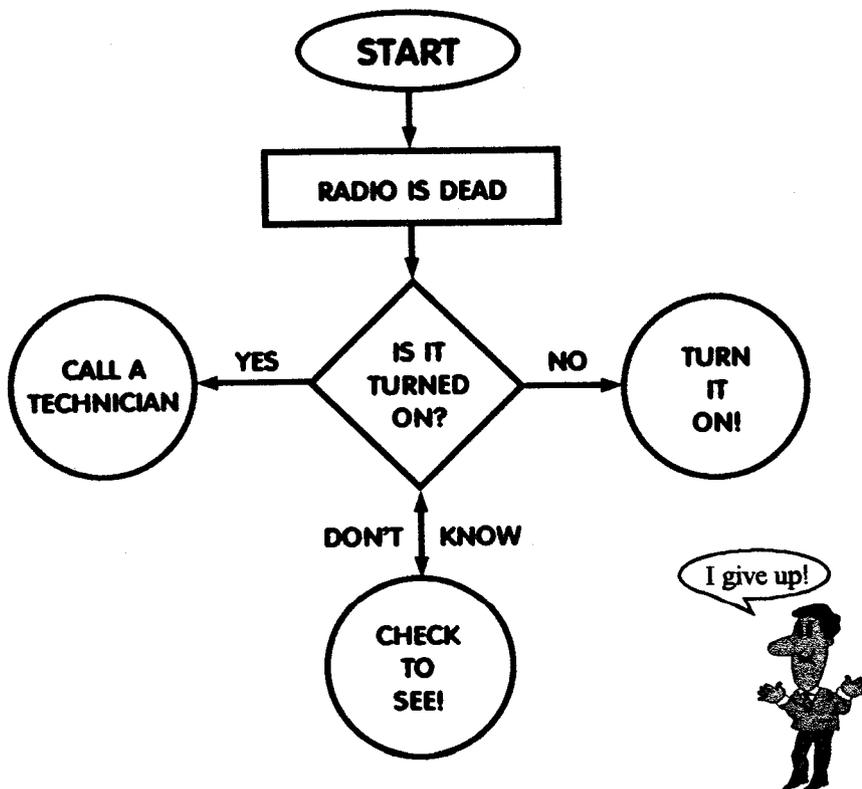
The Land Mobile Communications Council (LMCC) is backing away from their request that the FCC reallocate the 440 band to the Private Mobile Radio Service (PMRS) according to the American Automobile Association (AAA), a member of the LMCC.

The AAA doubts the FCC will ever agree to the request for the 440 band in the face of strong support for continued Amateur Radio presence on the band. The Amateur Radio Service has a secondary allocation in the band, which is primarily allocated for federal government use.

The LMCC backed off on its demand that the band be reallocated following strong support for Amateur Radio from the Association of Public Safety Communications Officials - International (APCO) and the National Telecommunications & Information Administration. The AAA also petitioned the LMCC not to infringe on the amateur radio bands.

(Compiled from The ARRL Letter, a publication of the American Radio League.)

### TROUBLESHOOTING MADE EASY!



Common Sense  
is not so  
Common.



Voltaire



