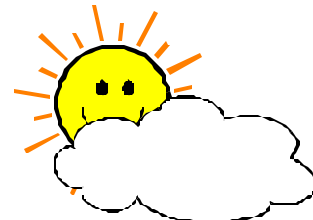
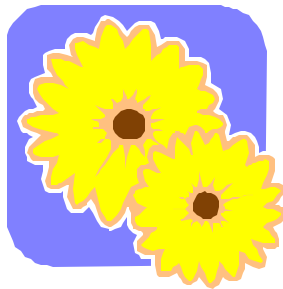
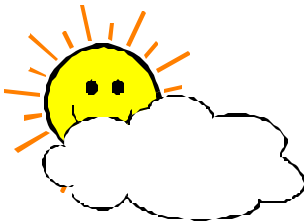




CAPERS

Candlewood Amateur Radio Association - Post Office Box 3441 - Danbury, CT

President – Frank Etzler – N8WXQ - phone - 860-350-3523
Vice President – Jeff Cantor –K1ZN - phone 203-798-6860
Secretary – Martha Babbitt – KB1IES - phone - 860-350-8804
Treasurer - John Ahle – W1JMA - phone - 203-438-6782



Issue: April 2004

MEETING CHANGE THIS MONTH: Friday, April 16 at 8 p.m.

President's Message

Happy Easter to all! In order to accommodate the Easter holiday, the April meeting has been moved back one week. We will meet on the 3rd Friday (April 16) and not the 2nd for April only.

The BPL issue still looms over amateur radio. The FCC has placed a significant bar for the BPL folks to overcome. Nonetheless, the FCC has not closed the book on this issue.

CARA members should see the ARRL web page to check the current status. Please send your thoughtful comments to the FCC according to ARRL guidelines for taste. It is important for amateurs to be seen as informed and thoughtful people.

At the April meeting we will have a representative from the power company to

address issues common to power lines and amateur radio. Besides BPL there are the regular noise issues. Again our tasteful opposition to BPL should be obvious but remember honey works better than vinegar.

The first weekend in May is the New England QSO party. CARA will operate as usual at W1AW on Sunday. We will need a couple of Extra class amateurs to keep all frequencies legal. I encourage some of our newer and less experienced hams to operate as well. You can use all the Extra class frequencies during the operation. It should be a great time. Please sign up.

I look forward to seeing you at the meeting.

73 de Frank, N8WXQ

Meetings

CARA's regular meetings are held on the second Friday of each month (NOTE: April 16 exception), beginning at 8 p.m., at St. Paul's Church Hall, Brookfield Center, CT. Informal "rag chewing" begins at 7:30 p.m.

Nets

CARA Weekly Net: Sunday nights at 7:30 p.m. 147.30+ (PL 100)

WestConn Net: Nightly at 8:30 p.m. 147.18+ (PL 114.8)

Tips Net: Tuesday evenings at 7:30 p.m. on 146.73- (PL77) (linked statewide).

R-Com Weekly Net: 145.47- (PL100) Thursday Evenings, 8 p.m.

ConnARES Area One (North) VHF Net: Mondays, 8 p.m., bi-weekly, alternately on 147.30+ (PL 100), or 146.73- (PL 77 or 100).

Conn ARES Issues Net: 3.965 Mhz +/-, Thursdays @ approx. 6:15 p.m. (following CT Phone Net)

CARA Minutes for February 2004

The monthly meeting of CARA was held at St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Brookfield Center, on February 13th.

The meeting was called to order at 8:07 p.m. New faces at the meeting included: Jonathan K1RFD, Bill McCuster KD7UHL, and Anthony K. from Danbury (presently studying for exam).

There was a motion to accept the secretary's report as printed in the CAPERS. The Treasurer reported that the total income was \$1,256.79 with \$172.14 as expenses. A list of members and their e-mail addresses was sent around to be checked for accuracy. A motion was made, seconded, and so voted to accept the Treasurer's report.

Old Business: None

Committees:

Field Day—application has been made for the park space, and we're waiting for response. John reported that he is reorganizing field day materials into sealed containers, but will need storage bins in the spring in which to keep these materials.

Hamfest—deposits have been made. We need flyers for April to pass out at other ham activities.

Repeaters—we still have more things to do, including gel cell batteries to install. Jonathan (thank you) is maintaining Echolink. 147.30 will be used as an area resource for emergency communications.

New Business -- Pete KZ1Z was presented with a certificate of appreciation and a personalized code key. He will be moving to Florida soon, and the club wanted to thank him for all his support throughout the years.

Program -- Club watched a movie on a VP8THU DXpedition.

Meeting closed at 10 PM

Respectfully submitted,
Martha KB1IET

ARRL Launches On-line Technician Class

(Pete, KZ1Z, called our attention to the following article from the ARRL Letter, noting "In many communities some have expressed an interest in obtaining a ham license, but are unable to locate a class within their area. Here is a concept to share. This could provide an additional avenue for new EOC RACES / ARES, Red Cross and Skywarn ops."

Thanks to the League's new on-line Technician Class Course for Ham Radio Licensing (EC-010) <<http://www.arrl.org/cce/Tech.html>>, prospective hams can study for their ticket wherever they can connect to the Internet

and on their own schedule. The course is offered through the ARRL Certification and Continuing Education (C-CE) program. Two new classes will open each month, and students may sign up anytime via the ARRL Web site <<http://www.arrl.org/cce/courses.html#ec010>> or by calling the New Ham Hotline, 800-326-3942. Class sessions begin April 6 and April 20.

ARRL On-line Course Development Coordinator Howard Robins, W1HSR, says the new on-line Technician course will include everything needed to successfully pass the examination plus help with getting a foothold in ham radio.

"The on-line approach to learning provides students a way to prepare for the exam at their own pace over an eight-week period with 24/7 access to the material," Robins said. The assignment of a very experienced "Elmer" or mentor to all students is one benefit of the on-line learning method. Another is a post-graduation on-line support group that's only available to course graduates. "This group will provide Elmering as the new ham gets started, as well as help with equipment and antenna questions or anything pertaining to Amateur Radio," Robins explained.

Steve Ford, WB8IMY, Chuck Hutchinson, K8CH, and Larry Wolfgang, WR1B, developed the class material. The Technician course takes 20 to 25 hours to complete, and those finishing the class will take their tests at a volunteer examiner test session <<http://www.arrl.org/arrlvec/examsearch.html>>.

Believed to be the first on-line Technician licensing class of its kind in the US, the course will closely follow the popular ARRL license manual Now You're Talking! The course fee--\$99 for ARRL members and \$139 non-members--includes a copy of the book. (Regular ARRL membership <<http://www.arrl.org/join.html>> is \$39 per

year, which includes QST, the official journal of ARRL--the national association for Amateur Radio.)

Students taking the class will be introduced to everything from casual operating to emergency and public service communication and to radio technology. Students also will learn about the role of radio clubs and of the ARRL Field Organization. A course syllabus <<http://www.arrl.org/cce/syllabus.html#ec010>> and a list of student activities <<http://www.arrl.org/cce/student-activities.html#ec010>> are on the C-CE Web site.

The Technician Class Course for Ham Radio Licensing and the virtual ham radio campus are available through ARRL's partnership with the Connecticut Distance Learning Consortium. For additional details, e-mail cce@arrl.org.

CARA 2004 VE Schedule

Make a note of the CARA-sponsored Volunteer Exam (VE) schedule for the remainder of the year:

- Saturday, June 5
- Saturday, September 18
- Saturday, December 4

These VE sessions are held at St. Paul's Church in Brookfield Center, the site of our regular monthly meetings. Registration for these exam sessions begins at 11:30 a.m. There is no pre-registration, but an e-mail in advance of the session, or telephone call, would be appreciated so the examiners know how many potential candidates to expect. The current fee for new license exams or upgrade exams is \$12. Be sure to bring with you two forms of ID – at least one with your photo. Also bring the original AND copy of CSCE's and/or amateur license. The registration form will be supplied at the session.

Questions or comments? Check with Frank, N1PE, frsileo@att.net, 203-438-0218 (Ridgefield CT).

Ecomm I Class Offered

Registration opens Monday, April 5, 12:01 AM Eastern Daylight Time (0401 UTC), for the on-line Level I Emergency Communications course (EC-001).

Registration remains open through the April 10-11 weekend or until all available seats have been filled--whichever comes first. Class begins Tuesday, April 20.

Thanks to the grant sponsors--the Corporation for National and Community Service and the United Technologies Corporation--the \$45 registration fee paid upon enrollment will be reimbursed after successful completion of the course. During this registration period, approximately 175 seats are being offered to ARRL members on a first-come, first-served basis. Senior amateurs are strongly encouraged to take advantage of this opportunity.

To learn more, visit the ARRL Certification and Continuing Education Web page <<http://www.arrl.org/cce/>> and the C-CE Links found there. For more information, contact Emergency Communications Course Manager Dan Miller, K3UFG, <dmiller@arrl.org>; 860-594-0340.

Reminder: Skywarn Training



Please mark these dates on your calendar and pass the word around.

A training class, taught by the National Weather Service (NWS), will be held on

Thursday, April 15, 2004, from 7:PM to 10:PM, at the Greater Hartford Chapter of the American Red Cross, 209 Farmington Ave, Farmington, CT.

A Skywarn class also will be held on Monday, April 19, 2004, from 7:PM to 10 PM, at the Manchester Community College, in Manchester, CT. All radio amateurs and interested parties are welcome to attend.

Even if you have attended in the past year, it would be worth your while to refresh your knowledge of severe weather. For additional information contact Roger K1PAI, k1pai@sbcglobal.net.

A Skywarn Spotter class will be offered Tuesday, April 13, at the Connecticut Department of Public Safety room 245, 1111 Country Club Road, Middletown, from 7 to 10 p.m. Talk-in is on 147.360 (no PL).

An Advanced Spotter Class will be held Thursday, May 20, at the East Haven High School auditorium, from 7 to 10 p.m.. The school is located at 35 Wheelbarrow Lane in East Haven. Talk-in is on 147.505 (1-meg split, PL 77). You must have a current spotter ID number to attend this class.



Seating is limited for both the above classes. For reservations contact Glenn, N1HAW, n1haw@arrl.net, or Jim, N1GPB, at N1gpb@arrl.net.

ConnARES Area One Reminder

ConnARES Area One (North) VHF Net is currently meeting bi-weekly, on Monday nights at 8 p.m. The net will be held alternately on the CARA 147.30+ (PL 100) repeater, and on the New Milford repeater, 146.73- (PL 77 or 100). Announcements will be made at the beginning of each net confirming the repeater in use for that evening.

For additional information contact Harlan, KB1ILY, hford01@snet.net or Bill, W1WJB, DEC, Area One, Bill@StudioOne-CT.com.

Portable PDA Contest Logging

by Jim Ritterbusch, KD1YV

Recent circumstances required that I abandon my permanent HF station. That was a tough break at the peak of contest season. With CQ WPX SSB rapidly approaching, I was itching to operate. After all, I still have my trusty Icom IC-706 Mk IIg in the car.

Logging was an issue -- I no longer have a notebook computer, and I didn't want to have to write paper logs and then retype them back into the computer. I have a Handspring Visor Personal Digital Assistant (PDA), which uses the Palm OS, but hadn't attempted logging with it.

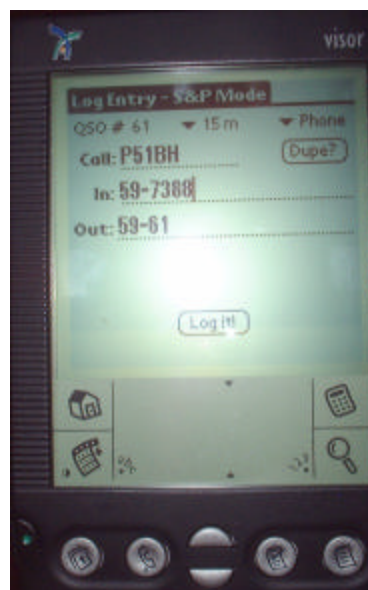
A search on the Internet turned up a number of logging programs that run on the Palm. Some are shareware, others are freeware. I downloaded about seven or eight of them, and began reading the manuals. I installed most of them on my PDA to try them out. I began this effort on Thursday, knowing that the contest started Friday night, local time.

Critical features that I needed were automatic serial number tracking (required in the WPX contests) and plain text log output. Dupe checking would be very nice to have as well. Only one of the packages that I tried met these needs -- GoLog by David Ek,

NK0E. You can download this software at <http://home.earthlink.net/~golog/> (make sure you include that tilde character before golog.).

On initial entry, you can start a new log, or return to one that is already open. On a new contest, you set up the default exchange, the dupe checking options for band and/or mode, and the local time offset from UTC (don't forget this like I did). There is an option to have the software send CW exchanges, but that requires the user to build a PIC-based hardware CW generator. The soldering iron is packed away, so I'll save that project for another day.

The logging screen is the ultimate in simplicity (see the screen shot with this article). The QSO number is automatically incremented with each successive QSO, and optionally filled into the outgoing exchange. The band and mode are set and remain for every QSO until you switch bands. For each contact, you fill in the callsign, and click on the "Dupe?" button to see if you have already worked this station/band/mode. Then you complete the "In:" exchange, and as soon as you complete the contact, click the "Log it!" button. Date and time are automatically assigned and logged.



When you finish the contest, you simply HotSync the PDA with your desktop computer, and the log is stored in a plain text format with all of the information you need. It is not in ADIF format, but it should not take much effort to make it so using a spreadsheet or text processing program.

With a completed log of sixty contacts, the program required only 55 KB of the PDA's memory. Overall, it is somewhat Spartan, but when operating portable or mobile, Spartan is the name of the game. Best of all, it is freeware. Next time you are operating from the field or your car, give this a try!

FEMA Appears to Backpedal on BPL
After expressing "grave concerns" to the FCC last fall about the interference potential of Broadband over Power Line (BPL) systems, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) now appears to be backing away from that strong stance.

Now a part of the Department of Homeland Security, FEMA filed comments December 4 in response to the FCC's April 2003 Notice of Inquiry in ET Docket 03-104. Many have cited those remarks in their own comments opposing BPL deployment. In a January 8 letter that's now part of the BPL Notice of Proposed Rule Making (NPRM) in ET Docket 04-37, Michael D. Brown, the US Department of Homeland Security's under secretary for emergency preparedness and response, told FCC Chairman Michael K. Powell that FEMA wanted to "clarify the record" to ensure that its filing was not "misunderstood or misconstrued."



"We have become aware that certain distinct approaches to BPL may have the potential to cause interference to FEMA's high frequency radio communications system," Brown said in his January letter. "However, we continue to study the BPL proceeding and have not concluded that there is a material interference problem or that all of the distinct technological approaches to BPL pose a risk of interference."

The FEMA official said his agency expects that there may be ways to provide BPL's benefits "without compromising the emergency communications capabilities available to FEMA."

The January letter stands in stark contrast to FEMA's predictions last December that "the introduction of unwanted interference from the implementation of BPL technology into the high frequency radio spectrum will result in significant detriment to the operation of FEMA radio systems" ...and saying such interference could "directly impair the safety of life and property..."

"The purported benefits of BPL in terms of expanded services in certain communications sectors do not appear to outweigh the benefit to the overall public of HF radio capability as presently used by government, broadcasting and public safety users," FEMA asserted last December in comments filed on the agency's behalf by Chief Information Officer Barry C. West.

BPL also could render such "essential communications services" as the Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service (RACES), the Military Affiliate Radio System (MARS) and the Civil Air Patrol (CAP) useless, FEMA said. FEMA and ARRL are signatories to a Memorandum of Understanding that focuses on how Amateur Radio personnel may coordinate with the agency to support emergency communications functions. FEMA's December comments also referenced ARRL's "Interference to PLC systems from Amateur Radio Operation."

Brown's January letter conveys a much milder, conciliatory tone. "We know that the FCC shares our appreciation for the importance of reliable communications in the context of disaster recovery and are confident that the Office of Engineering and Technology's technical assessment, as well as the Commission's regulations implementing BPL, will be sensitive to this issue," he concluded. "FEMA stands ready to assist in any way the Commission might find helpful."

The deadline to file comments in response to the FCC BPL NPRM is Monday, May 3. Reply comments are due Tuesday, June 1. Interested individuals and organizations may file comments via the Internet using the FCC's Electronic Comment Filing System (ECFS) <<http://www.fcc.gov/cgb/ecfs/>>. The FCC asks that anyone filing comments do so "only in the newly established ET Docket No 04-37."

W1AW/90 Operates Through 2004

The Hiram Percy Maxim Memorial station at ARRL Headquarters, W1AW, will sign with a special designator - /90 - through the rest of 2004. The call sign reflects the 90th anniversary of the League's founding by

Maxim and Clarence Tuska in 1914. Operation as W1AW/90 will begin April 3.

W1AW Station Manager Joe Carcia, NJ1Q, said he will encourage guest operators to use as many modes as possible, including RTTY, PSK31, Satellite and Hellschreiber. "Plus, we're going to try for SSTV WAS," he added. "It'll be tough, but we can do it."



Special QSL cards will be available for W1AW/90 contacts, and Carcia noted that self-addressed, stamped return envelopes should accompany all QSL requests. All contacts with W1AW/90 will also be uploaded to Logbook of The World.

Editor's Note:

Just a reminder that we're always looking for interesting features and news articles for the CARA CAPERS. Contact the editor, Barry, KA1JDD, barry@connollyco.com, or call: 203-748-1033.

