

**Special Report:
Bethel SET**



CAPERS **Apr 2008**

Candlewood Amateur Radio Association - Post Office Box 3441 - Danbury, CT
Visit us on the Web at <http://www.danbury.org/cara>

President – Frank Etzler – N8WXQ - phone - 860-350-3523
Vice President – Harlan Ford – KB1ILY – phone- 203-798-8096
Secretary – John Ahle – W1JMA – Phone – 203-438-6782
Treasurer – Bill Webb – W1AFX - phone - 203-775-0536



Meeting: Friday, April 11 at 8 p.m.

Message From the President

I hope that each of you had a happy Easter. There has been quite a bit of rare DX on the bands and some good low band propagation to work some FB DX. I hope you have had an opportunity to get on the air.

The New England QSO party will be held the first weekend of May. As in past years CARA will operate from W1AW on the Sunday of the Contest. At this month's meeting we will need to sign up a team to operate. I hope that those unable to operate at W1AW will take the chance to put New England on the air from his home station.

The ARRL continues to see changes in amateur radio activity resulting from the recent changes in the licensing structure. The League is seeing increases in membership and DXCC activity. Card checking is taking longer than usual because of the increased volume of applications.

This month's program will be given by Gene, KL7CE, on satellite communications. This is an interesting mode of amateur operation that can be done with an HT. Give it a try!

I look forward to seeing each of you at the meeting.

73 de Frank, N8WXQ

REMINDER: All members are invited to attend and participate in the monthly CARA Planning Meeting—generally the fourth Friday of each Month, 8 p.m., at the Stony Hill Fire Station.

Nets

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

Connecticut Phone Net (CPN) Monday through Saturday, 6 p.m., on 3.973 and Sundays at 10 a.m. on 3.965...

CW Connecticut Net, Nightly, at 7 p.m. on 3.640 (SEE ACCOMPANYING ARTICLE FOR INFO ON SLOW-SPEED CW NET)

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 Local VHF Net (now part of Area 5) : Second Monday of each month, 8 p.m. on CARA repeater: 147.30+ (PL 100)

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

Note: The CT Phone Net generally moves to 3.973 to avoid ongoing early evening interference from a short wave operator on 3.965. Continue to check 3.965 for the CT Phone Net and for emergency ARES traffic, but be prepared to go to 3.973 in the event of interference.)

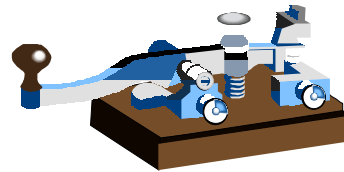
S-L-O-W – Speed CW Net

Reminder Notice

The following news item is from Bill KW1B: "The daily "Connecticut Net" CW net has begun twice-weekly slow-speed sessions to encourage new comers. Join us Wednesday and Saturday evenings at 7:00 PM, 3,533 MHz.

These special slow-speed sessions were created just for all our members who hanker to try out CW and see if they enjoy it. It seems there is some relatively new interest in CW around these days---even with all the "code-less" licensees that are the norm now. Several have expressed a new interest in working with the very oldest of ham radio modes.

I'll tell you two things about such a net that you won't believe till you get into it a little bit. First, it can be fun. Secondly, the pace of



events, even in a slow-speed CW net is very much faster than any voice net.

The magic of the very rapid pace of it is in the bare economy of what is sent! Why bother with such an old-fashioned mode?

There are several reasons, some applicable to EmComm.

- 1) CW is efficient. It is a very narrow-band mode, concentrating all its energy in a very thin slice of spectrum. It gives you more communications "punch" than any other mode, bar none. Did you ever notice that moon-bouncers and those guys who are working with weak signals way down at ultra-longwave at 500 KHz all use CW? The most range for the watt is why.
- 2) 2) CW is done at "writing speed". One guy sends, one guy copies in RealTime--done! Message passed!
- 3) 3) CW provides a degree of mode-based "data denial" that we don't have on any voice mode. Yes, computers copy CW, but very, very few scanner people or media people have such software; so, effectively, the Morse Code is very nearly a secret code in actual practice.

- 4) 4) It's fun to develop a personal skill shared by few. Working CW connects you to the oldest, deepest roots of ham radio. What other mode is over a century old and still in daily use?
- 5) 5) You'll work some Killer DX. If you've struggled with the SSB pile-ups, and just got frustrated, you'll be amazed how much better it is on CW. There are still pile-ups, of course, but they're smaller and more manageable. You'll see.

Connecticut's very oldest net, the nightly "CN" CW net has established two nights a week for slow-speed sessions, just for "new-bies". Wednesday is hosted by Andy, NX1Q, and Saturday, is NCS-ed by Bill, KW1B. 7:00 PM is the appointed hour, and 3.533 is the designated frequency. (The net is quite punctual.)

Here are two briefing documents, one extremely simplified to the barest of essentials, and the other is far more detailed. To get started, you need only the "essentials" one for now.

<http://www.StudioOne-CT.Com/JobPocket/CWEssentials.doc> and <http://www.StudioOne-CT.Com/JobPocket/CWDetailed.doc>

CARA Minutes 3/14/08

The meeting was called to order at 8:04 pm by Frank Etzler, N8WXQ.

- The minutes of the last meeting and planning meeting as included in the CARA Capers were approved.
- The Treasury has \$9583.60 as of 3/13/08. Additional dues were collected and remitted to the Treasurer.
- Rich Roznoy, K1OF, presented the topic of HF mobile antennas. He was assisted by George Peters, K1EHW. Their article was in the November QST. The major take-away is: an efficient ground to the car and the longer the whip the better.

- Ken, KD1DD, briefed the group about the ARES Drill on 4/5. He was looking for volunteers to man stations at the Bethel Health Center and Danbury Hospital.
- Ken, KD1DD, reported that the repeaters are all working and that construction has begun on a housing development near the repeater site. A new road might aide in reaching the current site.
- Frank reported that the New England QSO party is on May 3 and 4. CARA members are invited to the ARRL to operate W1AW on 5/4. Put CT on the air!
- John and Oscar gave an update on Field Day. FD is June 27, 28 and 29. Please mark your calendars and contact Dan, W1QK or Frank, N8WXQ to join one of the two operating teams. Winning team will have bragging rights and free entry to the Hamfest.
- KF6AJ has a 4KW generator for sale. Price is reasonable and contact Steve directly if interested.
- The March QST article "Simply Simplex" was acknowledged as written by Oscar Fuller, K1OF, featuring the pix of Harlan, KB1ILY.
- A letter to the editor in the March CQ was penned by Frank, N8WXQ.
- The VE test on 3/1 yielded two new hams. Thank you to Frank, N1PE for his continued VE session efforts.
- John, W1JMA, thanked Oscar for organizing the recent CERT training and also thanked John, KB1YLP, for hosting the CERT training at the Stony Hill Fire House.
- The meeting was closed at 9:50 p.m.

-- John M. Ahle, W1JMA Secretary

CARA Planning Meeting March 28, 2008

The meeting was called to order at 8pm by Frank, N8WXQ.

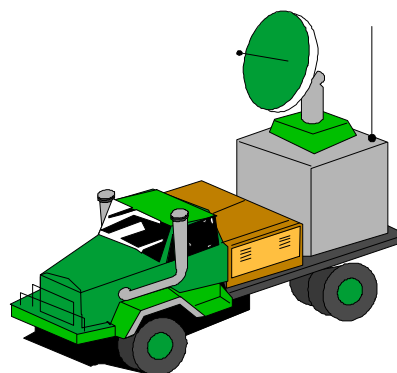
- Frank modeled a sweatshirt with the CARA logo as designed by Joe AB1DO and printed on the sweatshirt by CafePress. CaféPress will print logo on apparel and mugs. It was discussed and decided to look at the mug costs and determine if they can be sold at the hamfest. Joe will follow up on this item. Member can go to CafePress and order. More to follow at the meeting.
- Gene, KL7CE, is ready to give the April program on satellite communications.
- Given the housing project being constructed at the base of the repeater site, it was discussed that a work party be put together to move the 6m machine from Redding to the repeater site on the last weekend of April.
- Dan discussed the purchase of an antenna support launcher. The cost is \$257 plus shipping for the kit. Dan and Harlan offered to put the kit together. A formal vote will be made at the April meeting. This launcher will replace the need to use arrows in public places such as the field day site. The launcher uses compressed air for propulsion.
- The NE QSO party is the weekend of May 3 and 4. CARA will open W1AW on Sunday 5/4. The following will go to Newington: KL7CE, W1JMA, AB1DO and W1AFX. Others are asked to attend.
- Frank discussed the estate in Danbury that needs some looking into. Several volunteered to start the process, KL7CE, W1JMA and Carl. Frank will get JMA the phone number of the estate.

The meeting was closed at 9:15 pm.

-- John M. Ahle, W1JMA Secretary

Armed Forces Day Test Scheduled

The Army, Air Force, Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard are co-sponsoring the annual Military/Amateur Radio communications tests in celebration of the 58th anniversary of Armed Forces Day (AFD). Although the actual Armed Forces Day is celebrated on May 17, the AFD Military/Amateur Crossband Communications Test will be conducted on May 10 to prevent conflict with the Dayton Hamvention, scheduled for May 16-18.



The annual celebration features traditional military to amateur crossband communications SSB voice tests and copying the Secretary of Defense message via digital modes. These tests give Amateur Radio operators and short wave listeners an opportunity to demonstrate their individual technical skills and to receive recognition from the Secretary of Defense and/or the appropriate military radio station for their proven expertise. QSL cards will be provided to those stations making contact with the military stations. Special commemorative certificates will be awarded to anyone who receives and copies the digital Armed Forces Day message from the Secretary of Defense.

Look for schedules and frequencies of participating military stations to be published in May on the Army MARS Web site "<http://www.netcom.army.mil/MARS>".

Bethel Health Center SET

Hundreds of health professionals, emergency workers, Red Cross, police, fire and ham radio volunteers from 30 neighboring towns and health organizations converged on the Bethel Health Center late last week for a first-ever Connecticut Simulated Emergency Test (SET). The test is also believed to be the first such test in the nation.

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The goal of the SET was to test the state's ability to respond to a medical emergency involving a pandemic-like flu outbreak that would have stressed area hospitals' capacity to the limit and required the overflow be handled by a mobile field hospital set up on the outskirts of the Bethel Health Center. The center is located near the Bethel-Danbury border, just north of Interstate 84.

The event also served as an important "shakedown" test to see which areas of emergency response and which processes need improvement. An independent monitoring team scored emergency workers and support teams on their efficiency. The ham radio team received high scores for being well-prepared and efficiently delivering essential services.

Dozens of area ham radio operators, including many members of CARA, provided core communications linking hospitals, police, town Emergency Operating Centers (EOCs), and the Incident Command center at the mobile hospital. VHF communications was established at all remote sites, with HF available as well as a backup at most

remote sites. Rosty N2FEX drove the impressive Red Cross emergency communications truck on site—a \$500,000 vehicle that can provide satellite phone, Internet connection, video broadcast and other capabilities all under its own power.

The mobile field hospital, supplied by the State Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security, is a multi-million-dollar double-walled modular tent structure that can be customized and expanded with treatment and support rooms.

An external, mobile generator provides round-the-clock forced-air heat or air conditioning for the entire structure. When not in use, the mobile hospital will be stored in Danbury and will be available to cover emergencies involving some 43 towns in Western Connecticut.

The special photo section attached to this month's CAPERS highlights the many CARA members and support team members who turned out to support the SET. Dick Aarons, W1RNA, headed overall emergency communications for the event, ably assisted at ICS command headquarters by Bill KW1B, Harlan KB1ILY and Ken KD1DD, who set up and manned the on-site ham radio command post.

Dozens of other CARA members and area hams staffed town EOCs, area hospitals, State Police headquarters and provided on-site support at the Bethel Health Center—simply too many to mention by name. But they all performed as you would expect: hitting the road with Go-kits, setting up portable antennas and mobile bases stations, providing communications services for on-site emergency staff, and assisting with two-way radio training for non-ham field personnel.

See the attached "photo album" for a sampling of photos of the many men and women who worked hard to make the April 5th SET a valuable and useful experience.