



Capers

March 2009

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 – W1QH – phone- 203-798-8096

Secretary – Bill Thoren – N1TIW - Phone – 203-744-5138

Treasurer – Bill Webb – W1AFX - phone - 203-775-0536



**Meeting: Friday, March 13
Stony Hill Fire Station**

From the President

Spring is almost upon us. Spring begins a rather busy part of the year for CARA.

The New England QSO party is the first full weekend in May. We will need a crew to go to W1AW. I also encourage all to participate from their homes or other locations during the contest. Even a couple of hours of operation are appreciated.

Field Day is coming up in June. We need someone to step forward to be chairman. John, W1JMA, has agreed to take care of some of the technical details that can be handled remotely. The equipment is together. The chairman's duties will include publicity and coordination of activities. The volunteer will have help.

I encourage all the members to be active in promoting amateur radio and increasing their skills. To this end we will have printed some posters for display in public places. Business cards for distribution will also be printed. I

encourage all to accept speaking opportunities. CARA members have put together some excellent talks that could be shared by others. To this end, I spoke recently to a club in Shelton.

If you have still not paid your dues please do so. I am told that those who have been visited by the spirit of T.O.M. never fully heal from the wounds inflicted by the Wouff Hong and Rettysnitch. (HI HI)

This month's program will be presented by Bill, N1PJG and will concern feedlines. The cable connecting your antenna to your radio is often the most important item determining what you hear. I am sure the discussion will be informative and useful.

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

73 de Frank, N8WXQ

Minutes: CARA Monthly Meeting for February 13, 2009

The meeting was called to order by President Frank Etzler, N8WXQ, at 8 PM. There were 21 members and guests in attendance.

The program for the evening on “Restoring Old Radios” featured our own Mark Gilbert, N1MG. He first reviewed why Superheterodyne receivers were developed, the theory behind them and some of the components that characterize their construction. He used this part of the discussion to lead into what he really likes to do (other than QRP), namely get old, broken radios working again!



Another of our members, Andre Boucher, KB1QAU, recently purchased a late 50's era Hallicrafters SX-99 which he plugged in, turned on, heard some unpleasant arcing noises and immediately turned off. Since Mark's program was already about restoring old radios, he suggested that Andre bring the SX-99 so we all could see the



troubleshooting process. We will not go into the details here but in general the idea is to do no further damage, look carefully for obvious problems, bring the voltage up slowly and keep one hand behind your back when working on live circuits! In the case of the SX-99 the arcing noise was a defective main power transformer which will need to be replaced.

We would like to thank Mark for a very interesting program. Well done.



During the business meeting the Secretary's report was accepted as was the Treasurer's report of \$10,283.15.

Ken, KD1DD, reported on the 2M and 6M repeaters. A trip to the repeater site will be scheduled when the weather improves.

Joe, AB1DO, reported that the Hamfest plans are on schedule. Seminars have proven very popular and will be offered again this year; details to follow.

The Ham Radio poster which Frank, N8WXQ, is working on can be seen on our website, www.danbury.org/cara. How this poster will be used was detailed in the January 23, 2009 Planning Meeting Minutes on Page 5 of the February 2009 CARA Capers.

Oscar, KO1F, gave an update on the Connecticut ARES Region 5 Spring Training Workshop. Details are available at www.ctares.org or contact Oscar.

Ken, KD1DD, Joe, AB1DO and Gene, KL7CE are designing a secure WiFi network to be used for emergency communications. This network would be CARA sponsored and is completely separate from our repeater systems.

In order to test the feasibility of this network, some equipment would need to be purchased. Jim, KD1YV, made a motion to allocate \$200 for the necessary expenses and Bob, AC8O, seconded the motion which passed on a voice vote.

The meeting adjourned at 10:25 PM

Bill Thoren, N1TIW
Secretary

2009 CARA-sponsored VE session schedule:

- March 7th
- June 6th
- September 12th
- December 5th

All dates are Saturdays. Sessions will continue to be held at the Stony Hill Fire Station at 59 Stony Hill Road (Route 6) in Bethel, CT.



Registration begins at 11:30 AM. Walk-ins are always welcome--preregistration is not required. But if you know you will be attending a session a "heads up" e-mail or call is always appreciated.

For further info, contact Frank Sileo, N1PE, frsileo@att.net, 203-438-0218.

Reserve March 28 for Training Day

The ARES leadership team has been busily putting together an event targeted at refreshing and enhancing communications skills and bringing us up to date on the latest news / technologies. And, of course, to have some fun along the way.

Whether you are a stay-at-home operator, active in RACES programs, or part of Connecticut ARES, we have one thing in common - we enjoy the hobby of Amateur Radio and we want to help our communities when troubles strike. As such, it is vital that we keep our skills sharp and learn the latest tools and techniques that make us more effective when the time comes to respond and serve – continuous training is our way of staying prepared.

"Save the date" of **March 28, 2009** for a special event. You are invited to join the

group in **Southbury, CT** at the Region 5 Headquarters facility for **“SPRING TRAINING”** - a day of information, training workshops, and of course, fun.
--David Hyatt ,K1DAV

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, 7 p.m., 3.640

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 often moves to 3.973 to avoid ongoing early evening interference from a short wave operator

Reminder: ARRL Looking for Volunteers

ARRL is still looking for volunteers to give tours of the facility and W1AW at its headquarters in Newington, Connecticut.

ARRL gives hundreds of tours annually to visitors from all over the world and you can play an important role in shaping our guests' experiences! We will provide you with training to bring you up to speed on everything you need to know to give a great, 30-60 minute tour. While this is a volunteer

position, you will be entitled to perks along the way - like thank you lunches with ARRL staff or free ham apparel and books.

Volunteers are needed to give tours during the following shifts:

Monday 9am-12pm
Monday 1pm-4pm
Tuesday 3pm-4pm
Wednesday 9am-12pm
Wednesday 3pm-4pm
Thursday 3pm-4pm
Friday 9am-12pm
Friday 1pm-4pm

This is a great way to meet new people and to share your enthusiasm for the Amateur Radio Service. For more information or to volunteer, call Diane Petrilli at (860) 594-0297 or e-mail dpetrilli@arrl.org.

BSA Updates Radio Merit Badge Requirements

The new BSA Radio Merit Badge Pamphlet includes color pictures and updated charts and text. The Boy Scouts of America (BSA) has updated the requirements needed to earn the Radio merit badge. The new requirements became



effective with the publication of Boy Scout Requirements 2009. While no new content has been added to the program, the new merit badge pamphlet features lots of new information -- including color pictures and updated charts and text -- that reflects the

changes in the Amateur Radio Service since the last pamphlet update in 2002. Approximately 4000 Radio merit badges are earned each year.

According to ARRL ad hoc Scouting Committee member Larry Wolfgang, WR1B, the new Radio Merit Badge pamphlet had been in the works for some time. "BSA has been replacing all merit badge pamphlets with new booklets using color graphics and more modern presentations," he said. "With attractive color photos and clear text explanations of the requirements, the new merit badge pamphlet is a pleasure for the Scouts to read. The new text is due in large part to the efforts of longtime Radio Merit Badge Counselor and K2BSA National Jamboree Staff member Mike Brown, WB2JWD. I am looking forward to using the new pamphlet to teach Radio merit badge at our Council's Merit-Badge-O-Ree this spring, and to having a supply of the new books available for Scouts during the 2009 summer camp season."

Wolfgang said that the requirements for the badge have been shifted around: "The old Part 4 of Requirement 7(b) Broadcast Radio was pulled out and placed in the main body of the requirements as Requirement 8. In addition, the old Requirement 8 (to visit a radio installation and discuss what types of equipment, how it was used, what types of licenses are required to operate and maintain the equipment, and the purpose of the station) was moved up to Requirement 7, so that now the three options appear as Requirement 9. The main result is one additional full requirement."

ARRL Rocky Mountain Division Director and Chairman of the League's ad hoc Scouting Committee Brian Mileschosky, N5ZGT, called the Radio Merit Badge "a perfect avenue to introduce Scouts and Scouters to the wonderful world of ham radio. Ham clubs across the nation should locate a local Boy Scout Troop, secure permission from their Scoutmaster and/or committee to

teach the merit badge and deliver an exceptional Radio merit badge class. What the boys -- and their leaders and parents -- will learn in the process is a fair amount of what is part of the Technician license exam, so the next logical step after a merit badge class is an all-out recruiting effort to get that Troop involved in Amateur Radio. They'll meet new friends and have a great way of communicating while in transit to and from the field, as well as additional peace of mind through an effective means of emergency communications while in the backcountry."

Additional information -- which includes the new 2009 requirements -- can be found on the web at, <http://www.arrl.org/news/stories/2009/02/24/10667/?nc=1>

Wichita Ham Reveals How He Invented Closed Captioning

Story by Jessica Oakley, KSNW-TV

WICHITA, Kansas. Wichita is home to some fascinating people – some famous, some not. It's also home to a man little heard of, but his work has certainly been noticed by all.

To say Bill Kastner (**W0YGF**) loves electronics would be an understatement. His basement is filled with old radios and other gadgets that would look more at home in a museum. He likes his entertainment old school – no Facebook or chat rooms. Bill does his social networking using a ham radio and Morse code.

"In high school I had a stammering problem, so I resorted to Morse code and that was a means of talking to people without having the stammering problem," Kastner said. That childhood infatuation with radios led Kastner to pursue a career in electronics and he eventually earned his masters degree in electrical engineering from K-State.

After working on memory systems for the Minuteman Missile back in the 60's, Bill moved his family to Dallas where he started working for Texas Instruments.

"Thirty-two years have passed -- I guess it's time to come out and say I did something with my life," he said.

What he did with his life some 32 years ago at Texas Instruments has had a profound effect on everyone's life. Bill is the guy who developed and built the very first decoder that makes closed captioning on television possible.

"I designed the original closed captioning decoder. Other than my manager there were only two people that really designed the original closed caption mediums scale logic," he said. "I did the logic and the other guy was Joe Lynn, who did the interface to the television set."

In the mid 1970's Public Broadcasting contracted with Texas Instruments to design a device that would allow the deaf to read what was being said on air. The test for the Texas Instruments team was to decode a message.

Bill's decoder worked perfectly, but what he didn't take into account was how widely popular closed captioning would become.

"We thought in the beginning that there would be a decoder box that was sold at the time through Sears that would cost \$250 and there would be a limited amount of those in the world," he said. "We never expected that the FCC would declare in July of 1993 that all TV's 13 inches or larger would have a closed caption decoder built into them."

Now, everywhere he looks his invention is looking back.

"One of the interesting things is that I work out at the YMCA three times a week and I

can sit there and look at the TVs on the display in front of me and think ' I did that,' but yet I can't turn to the person next to me and say, 'Hey, I did that,' " he said. "No way. They wouldn't believe that."

He's really quite humble and shy even when asked about the role he played in broadcasting. In fact, people who have known him for years didn't know that he helped create closed captioning.

But he's equally content knowing that his work has helped bring words to those who could only see pictures.

(Tnx to Dan W1QK)

**Have YOU renewed your
CARA membership for
2009?
If not, use the attached
registration form and
return it to Bill W1AFX.**



Candlewood Amateur Radio Association
P.O. Box 3441, Danbury CT 06813

2009 Membership/Dues Application

Name: _____ Call: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____

Class: _____ Phone: _____ VE: _____ ARRL: _____ Email Capers: _____ (default Yes)

e-mail _____

Full Member
\$30 _____

Family (2 members)
\$52.50 _____

Family (3 members)
\$65.00 _____

Family (4 members)
\$75.00* _____
* \$10 each additional member

Senior (65+)/College Student \$23.50 _____

Associate Member (Non-Ham)
\$15 _____

Student (Under 18)
\$5 _____

Send check payable to CARA

To:

Bill Webb, W1AFX
12 Stage Road
Brookfield CT 06804

w1afx@arrl.net
203-775-0536