



Capers

August - 2017

Candlewood Amateur Radio Association

P.O. Box 741 – Hawleyville, CT 06440-0741

Visit us on the Web at <http://www.CaraRadioClub.org>

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Vice President – Jay Albano, N1NRP jjalbano@aol.com

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**CAPERS is the MONTHLY NEWSLETTER of the
Candlewood Amateur Radio Association**

Editor: Dan Fegley, W1QK

Next CARA Meeting: Friday, August 11, Stony Hill Fire Station

Doors open at 7:30 for socializing and conversation Meeting begins at 8:00 p.m.

Agenda:

- ***Pledge of Allegiance***
- ***Reading of Minutes for Approval***
- ***Treasurer's report***
- ***Webmaster's Report***
- ***Final Report and Organization for Hamfest - W1JGM***
- ***Repeater Committee and Cleanup Organization - KB1YHW***
- ***Discussion of NF Day Event & N1F station - W1JGM***
- ***New Business***
- ***Presentation?***

President's Message - de AB1WV



Photo Credit: KB1YHW

Hello all,

I hope this edition of The CARA Capers finds you all well and enjoying the summer. There are a lot of things to still finalize this coming meeting regarding the Hamfest and a cleanup party for the Spruce Mountain site. We need everyone's help. If we all pitch in, then each individual job becomes smaller. This will be the bulk of our upcoming meeting on the 11th of August.

Is anyone excited yet about the eclipse coming up this month? I sure am. I was lucky enough to live in northern MN during the total eclipse in 1979. My parents took me out of school and drove us about an hour and a half toward Winnipeg. We stopped on the road in Manitoba and got out our pieces of welder's glass and marveled at the spectacle. It truly is one of the coolest things I remember about my childhood. This year I am doing the same with my girls. We will be heading to CO to visit family and then driving into NE to see the total eclipse where totality should last around 2 1/2 minutes. I would suggest that you all make the trip to totality if you can. If not, the view from right here should be great with about 75% of the sun blocked by the moon. There are many sites and articles on the event and even some amateur radio experiments going on. A quick search will provide a huge amount of info to get you ready. Just remember not to look at it directly. Use some welding glass or make a pinhole projector like you did in school.

Hope to see you all at the meeting on Friday the 11th of August.

Marcus
AB1WV

**Vice-President's Message
de N1NRP**



Photo Credit: KB1YHW

Greetings CARA members and friends of CARA:

I hope everyone enjoyed the month of July.

Well, now we're in August, which is supposed to be the hottest month of the year- ya could have fooled me with some of those cold rainy days that we've had. But when the sun does come out, we usually do hit 90 degrees.

My Garden is thriving this year. My wife, Juliana, made a remarkably delightful garden-fresh salad using all the ingredients for it from our garden.

It was nice to see everyone at the July meeting; and I especially enjoyed Harlan's PSK31 presentation. I'm also excited that Greg and the repeater committee are making progress with our repeaters. I'm especially happy to learn that we're getting the 6-meter repeater going again - as well as the 220 machine - plus all before the snow

flies. I'm also looking forward to this year's CARA Hamfest. I want to thank John, W1JGM, for taking on that responsibility again this year. He's doing a fantastic job. Make sure you buy your raffle tickets, since John obtained some awesome radio gear as well as gift certificates for the prizes.

Keep in mind that the 10-meter CARA Ragchew net meets on Sunday at 7pm on 28.490 USB, and the CARA 2-meter FM net begins at 7:30 PM.

See you at the meeting.

73 - Jay

**June 9- CARA Meeting Minutes
de N1GSA**

The meeting was called to order by President Marcus Swearingen at 8 PM.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. Secretary's report was read and accepted.

Treasurer reported that 18% of the total Treasury funds that we started with in January have been expended.

Repeater Committee reported on the Yaesu machine. This still needs some further parts to make it fully functional to be properly linked. The Motorola machine needs some hardware changes to get this up to full time status. This should be about \$800 to complete. This

will bring the capability to split the antenna out to two separate antennas. An invoice has been asked for to begin this repair. Motion made and seconded for \$600 to start this project. This would be contingent on documentation delivery. Motion carried. A work party is needed to trim the extensive brush growth that has taken over the access to the Repeater container.

John, W1JGM, reported on the Hamfest progress. Thanks to Bill, W1AFX, for securing the permit and Town Hall reservation. The flyers are available for all to take and give out. This is the ONLY fundraiser that the club has, to pay for repeater repairs. John, W1JGM, and AL, KB1AL, will get together to create a recorded message that will be record an announcement that will be transmitted via the 2M repeater. Mike Walters, W8ZY, is going to give a presentation at the Hamfest. Vendors are slow in making commitments. There have been some door prizes received. Last year we spent just under \$300 for additional door prizes. Motion and seconded to expend up to \$350 for door prizes. Motion carried. John asked for names and addresses of vendors to send letters asking for prizes. Website has been updated with Field Day, and Hamfest info.

Mike Walters, W8ZY, spoke about the upcoming ARES Region 5 communications test that will occur on August 5th. He would like to see as many EOC's as possible activated to

test the simplex capabilities in Western Connecticut. Jay, N1NRP, volunteered to go to the Bridgewater EOC for this. There are 44 towns in Region 5. A Roll Call will be tried on both 2 and 6 meters. Relay stations will be utilized to complete the call. Gregory, KB1YHW, stated that there are 2 operator seats available at New Milford Hospital. The ARRL Simulated Emergency Test, also known as the SET, is also upcoming in October.

John, W1JGM, proposed that CARA participate on July 26th in New Fairfield, for the Car Show that is a benefit for the American Cancer Society. He asked for authorization to use the W1QI CARA Callsign. He made this a motion to use the call along with club tripods and antennas. This was seconded. Motion passed.

New Fairfield Day is coming up on Sept 17th. John has applied for the N1F special call. This would also be a club sanctioned event. Motion made and seconded to participate and again use the antennas and support equipment. Motion passed.

A letter was received and read asking for financial support to a Boy Scout event at Deer Lake Scout Reservation. It was decided to refer this to the Executive Committee for further investigation.

Dan, W1QK, made a motion to reimburse \$7.20 to Radio Oasis for the postage to replace a defective antenna. This was seconded. Motion passed. There is a website that specializes in hardware and software at greatly reduced prices for non-profit groups. Also, Microsoft has programs to assist non-profit organizations.

Field Day update by Dan, W1QK, and Harlan, W1QH. We made over 1100 contacts this year compared to about 600 contacts last year. The antenna setup and teardown seemed to go quicker and easier. Running seems to be the way to accomplish more QSO's. Search and Pounce is fun, but Running makes the Q's. Also, CW consistently seems to make contacts faster and more efficiently than phone. Harlan mentioned that a Thank You message be composed and sent to City of Danbury, Terrywile Park, and others for the use of the radios for this event.

John, W1JGM, will make Certificates of Appreciation to be presented.

Harlan, W1QH, gave a presentation about PSK31. It was an older presentation and a bit outdated, but still had much pertinent information.

Respectfully Submitted:
Gary Adams - Secretary

CARA Western CT Hamfest: de W1JGM

To: All Amateur Radio Enthusiasts, Commercial, and Related Vendors
The Candlewood Amateur Radio Association, Inc., is scheduling our annual Western Connecticut Hamfest on Sunday **August 27, 2017** this year. Please note this new date!

The venue and time will be the same; set up 6 to 8AM, with doors opening at 8AM till 1:00PM at the Edmond Town Hall, Newtown, CT.

There is a large indoor display area with tables and chairs available, electricity can be available. A large outdoor area for displays and tailgating is available for those with outdoor displays requirements. Refreshments will be available, inside with seating available to join your friends.

The Western Connecticut Hamfest is an approved ARRL Hamfest. If you or your company can sponsor a door prize or a prize for our raffle, please let us know. We will also have space available for advertisement and handouts.

To insure your spot, register early. For further information or to make reservations, contact John Morelli (W1JGM) at (203) 417-0160 or W1JGM@aol.com

Please forward this correspondence to anyone interested.

See you there!

John Morelli, W1JGM
Chairman – 2017 Western CT Hamfest

The Western CT Hamfest will take place on August 27th in Edmond Town Hall 45 Main Street Newtown CT. The Hamfest opens at 8AM until 1PM. At 10:30 that morning we will hold an ARES forum. This will allow us to talk about the August 5th Region 5 Comms test, and look ahead to the 2017 Fall SET. I hope to see many of you there. Mark your calendar.

Thanks
 Mike Walters, W8ZY
 CT ARES SEC



KC1EHW, N1DVS, N1NRP

Ham radio supports annual July 4th Ridgefield Fireworks

De N1NRP Photo credit: N1NRP

CARA members along with members of the Bethel Bears and Ridgefield CERT Team were the eyes and ears for the Town of Ridgefield's annual Fireworks display, held at Ridgefield High School. The operators worked closely with Dick Aarons, the Ridgefield Police, and EMS. Harlan Ford, W1QH, was net control - while each operator was assigned an area to monitor. A great time was had by all - with no incidents reported.



KD1DD, W1QH, KC1EHW, N1NRP, N1GS



(L-R): W1QH, KD1DD & Dick Aarons, N1RNA



Dick Aarons, N1RNA and Jerry Myers, Acting Ridgefield FD Chief



Connecticut ARES Region 5 conducts a weekly net each Wednesday at 7:30 p.m.

New Milford: 146.730 MHz -600 kHz PL 192.8 Hz
NARA analog repeaters for this net:

Washington: 441.850 MHz +5 MHz PL 77 Hz
Woodbury: 444.800 +5 MHz PL 192.8 Hz
Warren: 53.970 MHz -1 MHz PL 110.9 Hz
Please check in – All are welcome.

New ARES Repeater Tested

De KO1F

ARES in the Danbury area has a new tool in its kit to respond to emergencies or events that call for our services. A mobile repeater was acquired and has been tuned to the UHF “Shared Non- Protected Frequencies”. We were able to take advantage of the CARA Field Day event to setup, test, and train operators in the use of this new tool.



Since this was a new device, it was important to have trained operators and allow the user to see for themselves the ease of the deployment of this asset. During field day, we set up the repeater - instructing others along the way, After the initial setup, we were able to position operators at different locations to test the effectiveness of the unit and demonstrate its capability.



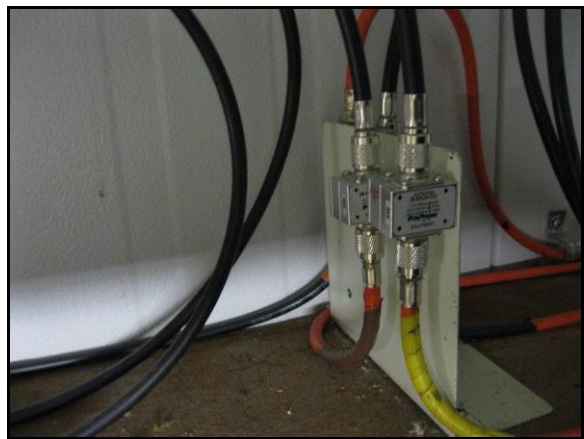
Photo Credit: KO1F

Several operators had the opportunity to receive this training during Field Day. Now, with several trained operators, the unit is available for deployment and can be operated as needed / where needed by those trained during Field Day weekend.

Danbury Hospital: ARES Antenna Repairs Completed De NG1R & W1QK



HF and VHF antennas: Danbury Hospital
Strook Tower - penthouse mechanical room.



Polyphasers inside penthouse mechanical
room.

The 3 antennas attached to the penthouse mechanical room of the Strook Tower at the Danbury hospital were in need of repair. Over the past several months, the ARES team consisting of KO1F, NG1R, W1QK, W1QH, and N1NRP worked to replace and test the HF, VHF and UHF antennas



Polyphaser lightning suppressors are installed on
each color-coded feedline.



W1QH "wrapping up" the new fan dipole for
transportation and installation at Danbury Hospital.



NG1R and W1QK assembling the new fan dipole.



Fan dipole kit parts – ready for assembly.



Discone Antenna #2.



Field testing the replacement fan dipole – NG1R, W1QH & W1QK.



Discone antenna #2.



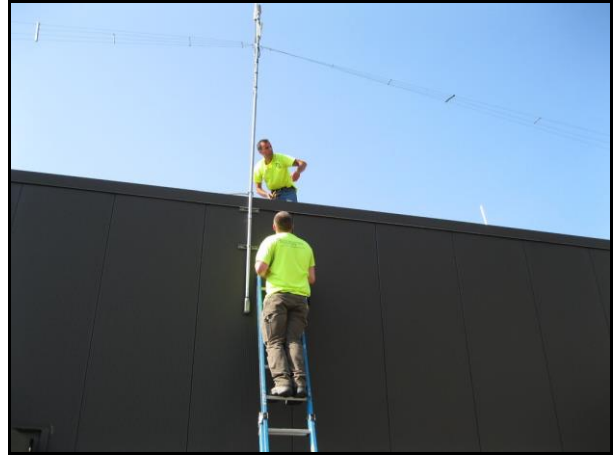
Checking and labelling conference room bulkhead connectors for the VHF and HF antennas.



Custom designed and fabricated bracket for replacement fan dipole center support.



Perry Simone repairing the PL-259 connector on the Discone Antenna #2 attached to the Penthouse on the Strook Tower.



Electrical Contractors: Mike McKay and Perry Simone re-installing the center support conduit to the penthouse mechanical room outside wall.



Fan dipole support bracket.

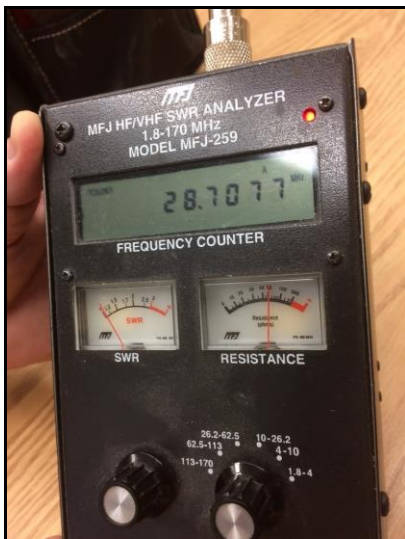
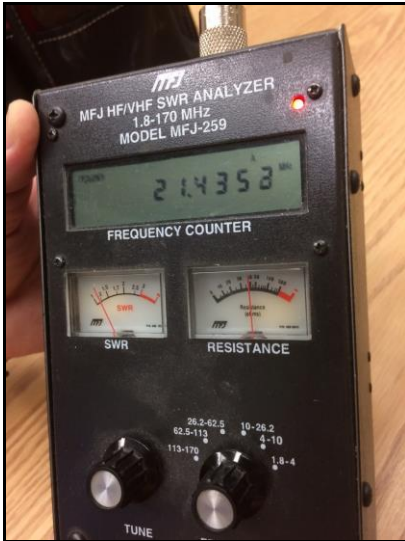
MFJ-259 Antenna Analyzer Measurements:



Fan dipole support bracket with Danbury Hospital back-up EMS antenna above.

CT ARES Region 5 Field Day: June 14, Post University, Middlebury.

Photo Credit: KB1YHW



Region 5 REPT Vehicles on display.



Region 5 REPT Field Day – Post University.

Photo Credit: NG1R & W1QK



CARA is an ARRL Affiliated Club



(L-R): NG1R, W8ZY, & W1QK with the ARES stations on display.



Oscar Fuller, KO1F – with the Region 5 MCV, Mobile Communications Vehicle.



Region 5 MCV: Mobile Communications Vehicle.



NG1R & W1QK



HF/VHF Go-Kit: NG1R



Mike Walters, W8ZY - ARRL CT Section Emergency Coordinator and former Region 5 District Emergency Coordinator.



HF/VHF Brookfield EOC KX1BK Go-Kit
Designed and built by W1QK

CARA Participates in Benefit New Fairfield Car Show

De W1JGM & W1QH
Photo Credit: W1JGM

CARA was On-the-air with W1QI as a special event station during the second annual New Fairfield Benefit Car Show held on Saturday, July 29.

CARA members participating: John - W1JGM, Tom - WX1T, Harlan - W1QH and David - KB1ZAC. 48 contacts were made during the 4 hours of casual operation.

Peter Weinberger Memorial Car Show
Company A Fire House, 302 Ball Pond Road
New Fairfield,

To benefit regional hospice and palliative care and the New Fairfield Volunteer Fire Dept. See flyer for more info and registration form: <http://www.rubberhitstheroad.info/ev.../file-2979.jpg>

Peter was a member of the Viper Owners Car Club. He was a class-act: always excited to show off his Viper and have fun with the crew. His Fire company puts on a car show in his honor and it would be great if we could show up with some cars.



WX1T & W1JGM activating W1QI





Connecticut Phone Net – CPN

Meets daily: M-F 6:00 p.m. 3.973 MHz.
 Sunday: 10:00 a.m. 3.965 MHz.
 CARA Contributions:
 Wednesday Net control: Harlan, W1QH
 Net Manager: Tom, WX1T



Weekly Sunday CARA NETS:

CARA 10M SSB “Rag Chew Net”:
 28.490 MHz. 7:00 pm Sunday

CARA 2M FM NET:

W1QI Repeater – 7:30 pm Sunday

CARA PSK31 Digital NET:

28.100 MHz. 7:00 pm Tuesday



Worked All Connecticut Counties Award, WACC – Sponsored by CARA:

<http://www.cararadioclub.org/activities>

Upcoming Contests, Hamfests & Meetings:

August 5: NAQP - CW

August 5: CT Region 5 ARES Drill

August 11: Monthly CARA Meeting – Doors open at 7:30 pm

August 12: Maryland QSO Party

August 14: ARES Meeting – Danbury EOC

August 19: NAQP – SSB

August 19-20: International Lighthouse and Lightship Weekend, ILLW, event

August 21: Solar Eclipse QSO Party, SEQP

August 26: Ohio QSO Party

August 9, 16, 23, 30 CWT:1300Z,1900Z, 0300Z

New England and other local hamfests:
<http://web.mit.edu/w1gsl/Public/ne-fleas>

Complete Contest calendar at:
<http://www.hornucopia.com/contestcal/contestcal.html>

Upcoming CARA Calendar:

- August 11 : CARA meeting - doors open at 7:30
- August 25 : Monthly CARA planning meeting – SHFD – Begins at 8:00 pm
- August 31: CARA September Capers input deadline
- September 16: CARA activation of N1F at New Fairfield Day event

On Monday, August 21, 2017, all of North America will be treated to an eclipse of the sun. Anyone within the path of totality can see one of nature’s most awe-inspiring sights - a total solar eclipse. This path, where the moon will completely cover the sun and the sun’s tenuous atmosphere - the corona - can be seen, will stretch from Salem, Oregon to Charleston, South Carolina. Observers outside this path will still see a partial solar eclipse where the moon covers part of the sun’s disk. NASA created this website to provide a guide to this amazing event. Here you will find activities, events, broadcasts, and resources from NASA and our partners across the nation.

<https://eclipse2017.nasa.gov/>



The SEQP will take place on August 21, 2017 from 1400 – 2200 UTC. Partial eclipse begins at about 1600 UTC in Oregon ends at about 2015 UTC in South Carolina.

On August 21, 2017, a total solar eclipse will cause the shadow of the moon to traverse the U.S. from Oregon to South Carolina in just over 90 minutes causing dramatic changes in both the ionosphere and HF propagation. The Solar Eclipse QSO Party (SEQP) is a HamSCI-ARRL sponsored operating event to generate data to study ionospheric changes during the eclipse. Not a ham radio operator yet? Learn more about it from the [American Radio Relay League](#).



OPERATING TIP

Don't forget the new [ARRL 222 MHz and Up Distance Contest](#) debuting on August 5-6, 2017. This 24-hour contest has a wide range of entry categories, and there will likely be plenty of FM, CW, SSB, and digital modes like MSK144 and FT8 in use. Contacts on higher frequencies in general earn bigger points, so there will be plenty of activity from height-advantaged locations. Check the rules for Club and Team competitions, and requirements to register Teams *before the contest*. Log deadline is 14 days following the contest.

Astron power supplies have been in production for decades. In the rare event that you need to troubleshoot one, you might find this website of [Astron Power Supply Schematics and troubleshooting information](#) helpful, in addition to contacting the manufacturer. (via [ARRL Collegiate Amateur Radio Initiative Facebook Page](#))

Annual 13 Colonies Special On-the-air event held.

06/27/2016

The eighth annual **13 Colonies Special Event** was held from 1300 UTC on July 1 until 0400 UTC on July 7. Stations working the special event station in at least one of the original 13 states — or all 15 participating stations — will be eligible for a certificate. A Liberty Bell endorsement will be attached for stations contacting sister special event station WM3PEN, in Philadelphia, where independence was declared. Back this year, is a second sister station GB13COL in Durham, England.

Stations were on the air from each of the original 13 colonies — Connecticut (K2D), Delaware (K2E), Georgia (K2G), Massachusetts (K2H), Maryland (K2F), North Carolina (K2J), New Hampshire (K2K), New Jersey (K2I), New York (K2A), Pennsylvania (K2M), Rhode Island (K2C), South Carolina (K2L), and Virginia (K2B). All HF bands and all modes will be in play, with the exception of 60 meters. Operation on 2 and 6 meter simplex is encouraged.

Follow this link to apply for your 13 Colonies Special Event Certificate:

<http://www.13colonies.net/logs.html>

A donation is requested by the sponsors.

Scout Expo 2017 event:

“Scout Expo 2017” is a weekend camp-out of fun activities for about 2,500 Scouts in the Connecticut Rivers Council. This Boy Scout Council covers about 2/3 of the state.

What: Scout Expo 2017

Date: Saturday, Oct. 7

Where: Hebron, CT

Hours: 7:30 am - 4 pm

Amateur Radio Activities

I have been asked to plan and coordinate Amateur Radio activities for this event, and I Need YOUR HELP to make it happen.

Amateur Radio was a Big Success 2 years ago at “ConnJam2015” (Connecticut Yankee Council). For “Scout Expo 2017”, our plans include:

1) Get On-The-Air (GOTA) - Talk to The World!

Need:

- 3 HF/VHF/UHF Stations (complete with independent power sources)

- 9 Operators (1 General/Extra Class Operator min. per station)

2) Morse Code Center

Need:

4 CW Operators to introduce CW and teach groups of 8-12 Scouts how to send their name in CW

3) Radio Message Center

Need:

- 1 VHF Station (Voice and Data), with independent power source

- 2 Operators to originate and move Scout traffic via NTS

4) Data Communications

Need:

- 4 Operators

- 2 Stations for either RMS Express (P-2-P across the field), or MESH Networking

(both with independent power sources)

5) Find “The Lost Patrol” (Boy Scouts) / “Find Ethan” (Cub Scouts)

Need:

- 4 Operators with Amateur Radio Direction Finding (ARDF) antennas and HT Radios
- 4 ADRF Transmitters (“Foxes”) to Hide

6) “Track the Council Commissioners”

Need:

- 1 Operator to staff the Automatic Packet Reporting System (APRS) Activity Booth
- 2 APRS Tracking Transmitters;
- 1 computer; 1 med/large Video Display (or Projector and Screen)

- Portable Wi-Fi Hotspot

7) International Space Station /Satellite Communication

Need:

- 2 Operators to demonstrate and talk about Amateur Radio in Space.

8) Amateur Radio Information Booth - with Mr. Radio Answer Man

Need:

- 1 volunteers for this Information Booth to promote Amateur Radio/Clubs and answer questions.

We **NEED YOUR HELP** to pull this off.

It is going to take a team of 27 Amateur Radio volunteers in order run these 8 Radio Activities.

Will you be one of them? Great!

Don't Delay!

Please contact me to volunteer and more information

ConnecticutSYC@gmail.com

I look forward to speaking with you.

Thank you.

73, Douglas Sharafanowich - WA1SFH

ARRL Section Youth Coordinator

Lighthouses, Lightships, and Amateur Radio

Around 1993/1994, a group of Scottish Amateur Radio operators, associated with the Ayr Amateur Radio Group (AARG), met on a wet wintry evening after a club meeting to consider a portable radio operating event in the summer when members could get out on a sunny weekend.

Many venues were considered. These included ports, airports, castles and other similar sites. It was finally decided that lighthouses would be best because of their universal appeal to everyone. The group knew there was high interest in preserving the lighthouses in Scotland, so they formed the Northern Lighthouse Weekend radio event. During their early research, it was discovered that the lighthouses of Scotland were controlled by the Northern Lighthouse Board in Edinburgh, who were not only responsible for the lighthouses of Scotland, but also around the Isle of Man. Approval was sought and obtained from the Northern Lighthouse Board to establish Amateur Radio stations adjacent to their property.

In February 1995, an invitation was sent to all Scottish Amateur Radio clubs and the Isle of Man Amateur Radio Club to join in the fun weekend to be called the Northern Lighthouse Activity Weekend. They were asked to establish and operate an Amateur Radio station at a lighthouse during the third weekend in August. The first-year event had 11 stations established at a variety of lighthouses, operating primarily on the HF bands. Over that weekend, each station made approximately 750 contacts with other Amateur Radio stations around the world.

The following year, the Scottish radio clubs were involved in a weekend activity with the theme of Scottish Firths (river estuaries), so two years had lapsed before the next Northern Lighthouse Weekend activity took place. During this period a Danish ham inquired, through a letter to the Practical Wireless publication, if there were any lighthouse activities on amateur radio.

Following discussions with the group, it was decided that Danish stations could and should join in the fun of the weekend lighthouse event. Soon after, Germany, South Africa and France asked to join in, and since the operations would now involve lightships, the name of the weekend was changed to The International Lighthouse/Lightship Weekend (ILLW).

The third full weekend in August became the annual event for The International Lighthouse/Lightship Weekend, and has slowly grown in popularity. In 1999, there were 204 lighthouse/lightship Amateur Radio stations in operation from 36 countries.

In 2007, 380 Amateur Radio stations

took part. In 2014, there were 544 Amateur Radio stations in 56 countries taking part that had registered on the ILLW web site. This is not the entire total number of participants, for many did not register on the official ILLW web site.

Statistics and complete information on the ILLW event can be found at:

<http://illw.net> and visit <https://illw.net/index.php/entryform.html> to register for this event. In addition, there is a sizable amount of other related lighthouse and lightship information, including a number of stories from recent participants.



Connecticut Phone Net – CPN

Meets daily: M-F 6:00 p.m. 3.973 MHz.
Sunday: 10:00 a.m. 3.965 MHz.
CARA Contributions:
Wednesday Net control: Harlan, W1QH
Net Manager: Tom, WX1T



For a free download, visit:
<https://n1mm.hamdocs.com/tiki-index.php>

2017 CARA Ham Exam Schedule:



2017 Amateur radio exams sponsored by CARA at the Stony Hill FD:
September 9, December 2
Saturdays - starting at 11:30 a.m.

Walk-ins are welcome, but it's helpful if candidates call or e-mail Frank Sileo, N1PE, at 203-438-0218, or send a message to frsileo @ att.net

Other upcoming VE exam sessions:

Washington CT firehouse on Bee Brook Road at 9 AM Saturday morning on the following dates:
Oct. 14

Please feel free to direct questions to w8zy@hotmail.com
Walk-ins are welcome and we will be testing for all classes.

Sponsor: Northwest Amt
Location: Litchfield Firehouse, Litchfield, CT
Time: 7:00 PM (Walk-ins allowed)

Sept. 12, Oct. 10, Nov. 14, Dec. 12.



CW Ops CW Academy:
Interested in learning CW or improving your skills?

Check out www.cwops.org

"CW is an art of incremental improvements over a lifetime, getting ever closer to an ideal of perfection which is always moving and always presents a new horizon to strive for." Carlo Consoli

CWops "CWT" Every Wednesday Regular Tests:

Full Speed Start: 13Z, 19Z, 03Z (+1), 1-hour each session
Exchange: name/number (members)
name/SPC (non-members) Avoid DX pileups!

CWops CW Practice Sessions:

For: On-air practice at 13+ wpm for CWA students, graduates, others wishing to have real-time CW practice with others similarly afflicted with a love of CW and a need to improve proficiency, with a goal of 25+ wpm.

Purpose: To improve CW through on-air practice at a time and place when others are likely available. Time and place: 7035-7045 kHz every Tuesday, Friday and Sunday around 6-8 pm local time. That means possible overlap with other time zones, which may mean 5 pm in Texas and 7 pm in New York. Conditions at this stage of the sunspot cycle make a comparable plan on 20m and higher for international contacts a risky proposal so for now we will limit this to 40m local evenings. 73 Jerry, AC4BT, CW Academy Manager

The Storied History of the Ham Radio Call sign

Mike Ritz, W7VO
Copyright 2016, 2017



Every legal amateur radio operator in the world has a government issued call sign, and many hams are better known to their radio friends by their call sign than they are by their given birth name. The uniqueness and prestige of a call sign is indeed one of the most important things that provide the persona that IS amateur radio. Remember when you first opened that letter from the FCC, it was not unlike Christmas day as you learned what your new call sign would be. From then on, you would be known by that call sign.

Call signs are important indeed. Think of the call sign **W1AW**, and 99% of hams would know that this once identified Hiram Percy Maxim, the founder of the American Radio Relay League (ARRL). That call sign was so important that it later became the official call sign of the ARRL. But, if one thinks about it, we don't really *own* these call signs, they're *leased* to us by the FCC for our use as long as we remain licensed. We are the caretakers, and when we become a silent key they are passed along to the next caretaker. (This author is the fifth caretaker of the **W7VO** call sign, (and seventh if one includes the original **7VO** which has been traced back to 1922.)) However, this begs the question; where did our treasured call signs first originate, and what is the evolution of this most important moniker? Of course, one cannot discuss call signs without covering some of the storied history of amateur radio itself in the process.

The origins of amateur radio call signs go back to the earliest days of radio, informally at first, then more formalized as major world events transpired that changed the face of amateur radio itself. This evolution can be broken down into five distinct periods of history:

- 1) **The Pioneer Years, pre - 1918**
- 2) **The Reconstructive Years, 1918 - 1927**
- 3) **The Pre-War Years, 1928 - 1941**
- 4) **The Post-War Years, 1945 - 1975**
- 5) **The Modern Era, 1975 - present**

The Pioneer Years, pre 1918, “The Days of Anarchy”

The very early days of ham radio was an interesting time, not completely unlike the untamed wild west itself. Prior to 1912 there were no real laws governing the new communications medium known as “wireless”, it was for the most part completely unregulated. The airwaves of the time consisted of signals emitting from crude spark gap transmitters, by a combination of governmental, commercial interests, and fledgling ham radio operators (who mostly worked for these other interests). The Marconi Company was among the first to use three letter call signs to identify their transatlantic coastal wireless telegraph stations, and to identify their company owned shipboard stations. The coastal station call signs started either with a “**V**” (for “Voice of (somewhere)”, or “**M**” (for “Marconi”), while the shipboard stations just used the starting letter of “**M**”. Amateur radio operators for the most part started off by using just names as identifiers, such as “**BILL**” or “**MAC**”, then that evolved into a combination of two or three letters, a mixture of letters and numbers, or even just numbers! It would be easy to see that there ended up being a LOT of overlap in call signs, both commercially, and among hams themselves. Was “**MAC**” a Marconi Company owned shipboard station sailing off the coast of Newfoundland, or Miles A. Cornwall (using the call sign “**MAC**”), the ham radio operator in New York? With such a limited range for the spark gap transmitter (often around a hundred miles or so), this wasn’t much of an issue, (at least at first.)

However, as the airwaves became more and more congested it was clear that more needed to be done to coordinate and publish established call signs to reduce conflicts. While there were publications that listed known commercial wireless stations, the May 1908 publication of Modern Electrics magazine published one of the very first list (a “wireless registry”) of known amateur wireless radio operators, their associated call signs, and also the approximate wavelength they operated on. (One could argue that these are really the first ten documented ham radio operators!) Most of these hams used two letter identifiers signifying their initials, but one ham, Otto Curtis of Rochester, New York was simply known as “**Q**”, long before the letter became associated as fictional James Bond’s technical advisor.

NAME AND ADDRESS OF OWNER.	CALL LETTERS.	APPROXIMATE WAVE LENGTH IN METERS.	SPARK LENGTH OF INDUCTION COIL.
1—A. C. Austin, Jr., Hasbrouck Hgts, N. J.	AU	200	2 ins.
2—Otto E. Curtis, Rochester, N. Y.	Q	152	1 "
3—M. D. Douglas, Hasbrouck Hgts, N. J.	MD	100	¼ "
4—Harry Gross, Hackensack, N. J.	HG	125	½ "
5—Albert Higson, Jersey City, N. J.	AH	75	1 "
6—Harold E. Peck, Providence, R. I.	PE	40	1 "
7—J. Peters, Jr., Florissant, Mo.	PI	125	4 "
8—L. S. Stevens, Marlboro, Mass.	LS	60	1½ "
9—Newell A. Thompson, Brookline, Mass.	KN	400-700	½ KW
10—Earl Vogel, Ashton, Ill.	AN	56	2 ins.

From : Modern Electrics, May 1908

By May of 1909 the “wireless registry” listed many more amateur wireless stations and their call signs, most listed were using three letters by now. (It’s interesting to note that many used two letters followed by the third letter of “**M**” to denote that they were employees of the Marconi Company). Some hams were listed with a combination of letters and numbers, such as J.C. Randall of Albany, New York who was listed signing as “**S4**”, and F.W Harris of Renton, Washington, who signed simply as “**3B**”. One special call sign listed was that of Earl C. Hawkings of Minneapolis, Minnesota who utilized the call sign of “**HAM**”. I guess one could argue that he was the first *real* “ham”!

In such an unregulated environment that had many wireless stations competing, (all utilizing transmitters with very broad emission spectrums), and coupled with crude receivers on the other end, conflicts caused by both unintentional and intentional interference were commonplace. This was getting worse by the day, and one day it all came to a head. That day was April 15, 1912.

On that fateful day, the seemingly impossible happened. The “unsinkable” RMS *Titanic* (call sign: **MGY**), with 2,200 passengers aboard hit an iceberg in the North Atlantic, and was sinking fast. While there were hundreds of passengers eventually rescued by the RMS *Carpathia* (call sign: **MPA**), several problems with wireless radio communications of the day played a key role in delaying the rescue effort, and undoubtedly added to the *Titanic*’s fatality totals. For one, the shipboard wireless station aboard the *Titanic* was owned and manned by employees of Marconi Company. Marconi’s main competition for the ship wireless telegraph market was bitter rival Telefunken, based in Germany. At the time Marconi Company owned stations were not allowed to have any contact with Telefunken owned stations (call signs beginning with a “**D**”), and as a result messages from the competition were largely ignored. In addition, there was both

unintentional and intentional interference from other commercial stations (and hams alike), making for even a more chaotic scene. Many thought the distress signals from the doomed ship were fake. After all, how could the “unsinkable” *Titanic* really be sinking? It must be “fake news”!

There was also a third issue. The Marconi Company early on had established the “**CQD**” (“CQ Distress”), message. The now familiar “**SOS**” had actually been made the worldwide standard at the second International Radiotelegraphic Convention, was signed in 1906, and became effective on July 1, 1908. This was a full four years earlier than the *Titanic* sinking. Only the Marconi Company equipped ships still used “**CQD**” as the standard distress message when the *Titanic* ran afoul of the icebergs in the North Atlantic.

While the above is a nice narrative about a well-known disaster, what does this *really* have to do with amateur radio call signs? When the dust settled, the US Congress began investigations into how to keep this historic disaster from repeating itself. Besides the sole remaining *Titanic* wireless operator, Harold Bride, the radio pioneer and tycoon Guglielmo Marconi himself was called before Congress to explain his company’s practices. The end result of these hearings became what is known as the Radio Act of 1912, written into law on August 13, 1912. This historic act had the following provisions, among others:

- 1.) It established a Federal law that mandated that all ships constantly monitor distress frequencies, (the primary one at that time set at 600 meters (500 kHz))
- 2.) Mandated that the familiar Morse “**SOS**” be the defacto standard for distress calls
- 3.) Mandated that all radio stations in the US be inspected and licensed by the federal government.
- 4.) Provided the possibility of fines for intentional or malicious interference
- 5.) Limited experimenters (amateurs) to 200 meters wavelength (about 1.5 MHz) and lower, (as frequencies higher than that were considered “useless”!)

The end result of the new licensing requirements dramatically dropped the number of amateurs from about 10,000 to around 1,200 almost overnight, and almost killed off the hobby. This was a win for the Navy and commercial wireless interests, as they really didn’t want any “amateurs” on the air anyway interfering with *their* airwaves. While US stations, (including amateurs) had to be inspected and licensed by the US government this act didn’t really do much for formalizing call signs per-se.

On the international front, the International Radiotelegraph Convention of 1912 established the first internationally recognized call sign standards, based on the country. This standard replaced the random three letter call signs prevalent then. Major world powers were given single prefixes such as “**N**”, “**W**”, and half of the “**K**” prefix allocations (**KDA-KZZ**) (United States), “**A**”, “**D**”, and “**KAA-KCZ**” (Germany), “**F**” (France), “**B**”, “**M**”, and “**G**” (Great Britain). The convention was signed at the International Radiotelegraph Conference in London on July 5, 1912. It is important to note that while these international standards were applied to commercial wireless stations, amateurs for the large part were still left on their own.

On May 9, 1913, the official United States Policy for Radio Call Letters was published: “The call letters for amateur stations in the United States will be awarded by radio inspectors, each for his own district, respectively according to the following system:

(a) The call will consist of three items; number of radio district; followed by two letters of the alphabet. Thus, the call of all amateur stations in New England (which comprises the first district) will be the figure "one" in Continental Morse, followed by two letters; in California (in the sixth district) the figure "six" followed by two letters; in South Carolina the figure "four" followed by two letters; in Missouri the figure "nine" followed by two letters, etc. The letters “X”, “Y”, “Z”, must not be used as the first of the two letters.

The territory of each district was as follows:

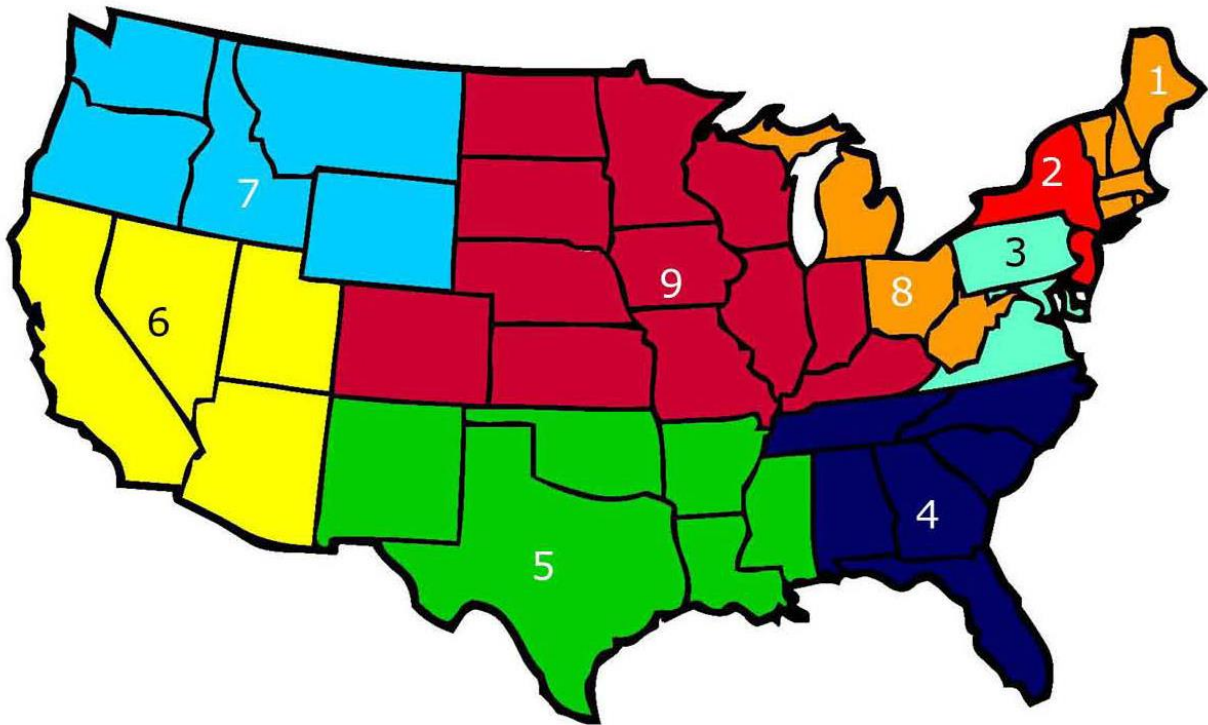
(b) The three items; a given figure first, followed by two letters of the alphabet, thus may be combined in 598 different calls, which will probably suffice for the amateur sending stations in most districts for some time to come.

(c) Radio inspectors will insert amateur station calls in station licenses according to this system, and will keep a permanent chart, of 598 squares, lettered with the alphabet from left to right and from top to bottom (“A” to “W”), inserting in the appropriate square the serial license number of the station to which the call letters were awarded. Within these limitations radio inspectors will use their discretion in the award of calls, avoiding, of course, duplications.

(d) When a station is abandoned and the license canceled, or if a license shall be forfeited for violation of law, the call assigned to it may be allotted to another station.

(e) If the entire 598 calls have been exhausted, radio inspectors will issue additional calls, consisting of the figure of the district followed by three letters. From such combinations should be excluded the combination **SOS**, and **PRB**, all three-letter combinations beginning with **QR** or **QS**, all combinations involving the repetition of the same letter three times, three-letter combinations beginning with “K”, “N”, “W”, “X”, “Y”, “Z”, and other combinations, which, for various reasons, international, national, local, or individual, may be objectionable.”

The “official” US amateur ham radio station call sign was officially born, but what is interesting to note here was that the Department of Commerce, who was responsible for these regulations, thought that 598 call signs per district were plenty “for some time to come.” Little did they know that the number of US amateurs would balloon to the almost three-quarter million we have now!



US Call Districts, 1912

Then on April 7th, 1917 the entire world of amateur radio was turned upside down, when by executive order amateurs were told to “dismantle and render inoperable radio wireless equipment, and antennas” as the United States formally entered “The Great War”, World War One. This mandate applied to both receivers and transmitters, and all amateur licenses that were issued to date were immediately cancelled. Amateur radio was dead, and radio itself became a government monopoly utilized strictly for the war effort. To ignore this mandate could be considered an act of treason, so it was not taken lightly.

Radio amateurs, while no longer licensed, were a valuable asset for the war effort. They were encouraged by the government to help man coastal wireless stations and enlist in the Signal Corps for field radio operations.

The Reconstructive Years, 1918 - 1927, “Starting Over”

At the conclusion of the war the US Navy put together a very large push with the Congress to ensure that future amateur radio activity remained silent, so the military could continue to have the airwaves for themselves. Mostly due the effort of Hiram Maxim and the ARRL that effort was defeated, and amateurs could once again be licensed and back on the air starting in early 1919.

Since all licenses had been cancelled at the start of US involvement in the war, all previous call signs were forever lost. When the nine district radio offices once again opened for business, amateurs lined up in an attempt to ensure low letter suffix assignments. (Are things really different now outside Apple stores these days when the new phones come out?)

As early as 1920 some of the call districts had run out of two letter suffix assignments, so began the three letter suffix call sign. (That said, there were some reassignments of two letter call signs, if you knew the right person!)

By 1923, as both receiver and transmitter technology greatly improved, international contacts between amateurs were becoming commonplace. Amateur stations, for the most part, still didn't follow the call sign prefix standards set by the International Radiotelegraph Convention of 1912, so there were again problems related to duplication of call signs. (Only this time on a worldwide scale!) Remember that the policy established in 1913 did not cover call sign prefixes for amateurs, only the district assignments and suffixes. There could be a **2AL** in New York working a **2AL** in Brazil, or another one in England. Amateurs, (being inventive as they are), took the matter in their own hands, and sometime starting in the mid 1920's US amateurs began using an unofficial "u" or "U" as a prefix on call signs to denote they were from the US. By 1927 the prefix "nu" (North America, United States) became commonplace on QSL cards (example: **nu6AA**), while a ham in Canada would use "nc" (North America, Canada) as a prefix, (ie: **nc7AA**).

ARRL 209 Atlantic Ave., Marblehead, Mass.

Radio 49JR Ur CW sigs wrkd hr March 13 at 10.45 PM EST

Audibility 2.5 QSB AC ORM 11 QSS -

Receiver: Low loss es 1 step - W. E. fornes

Trans: 74 Watt L. C. Meissner 450 V CRAC on plate

Antenna: 27 ft. long inside attic

DX Worked: L, EG, ED

Canada, 48 States. Hrd in South Africa es -

Remarks: Hope we can clear sum tjc next time
AM. cd qn sgn.

Pse QSL Tnx fr crd Best 73's R. P. Gray

Watts Input

Det. & 1 step **NU 110** Ant. Fund.

Radio Ur R sigs wrkd at M. E. S. T. 192

QSB Remarks:

Opr. E. B. PENDLETON

A' RADIO **BRAZIL** ARRL IARU SEP 192

SEUS SIGS ewibos RESPONDDES AS - EM - 192

QRK - QRN - QRH - QSS - QSB -

TRANSMISSOR **BZ-2AL** RECEPTOR

HARTHEY-INDUCTIVO **J. LEVY SILVA** P.O. Briggs

WATTS-IMPUT: 30 49 - ARTHUR PRADO EST. B. F.: 1

AMPS - ANT: 4 vert S. PAULO BRAZIL ANT: -

QRH-MTS: 35 PSE QSL CRD 73's

OBS: By paid to have in get card, only was ok, my tax & some other to be done in the air on 7/30

DX: Bz. R. U. C. H. Y. P. I. - G. M. H.

American Radio Relay League Station 1AW

Hiram Percy Maxim, Owner 276 No. Whitney Street, Hartford, Conn.

Radio 9CTR

Your ew signals were worked here on 11.11 at about 11.11

6.50 AM. E.S.T. Wave-length 193

on Taska three-circuit tuner and two stages audio amplification, Baldwin phones. QRM Bad

Audibility Fair QRN Some

Remarks: You were calling another 9. QSS Some

Weather Clear

Tone Good

Wave -

Would like report on 1AW's signals if you hear them. Best 73's.

Hiram Percy Maxim Operator

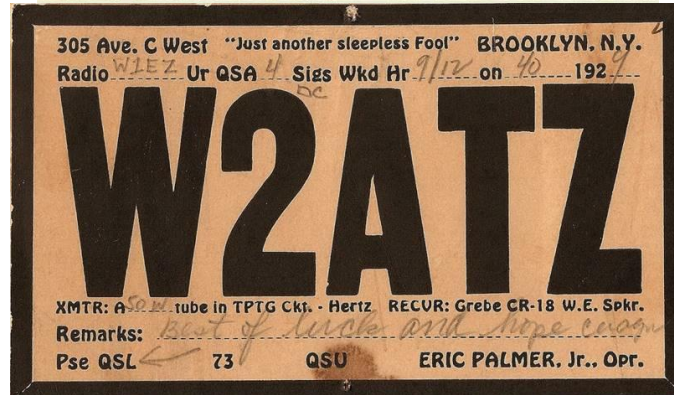
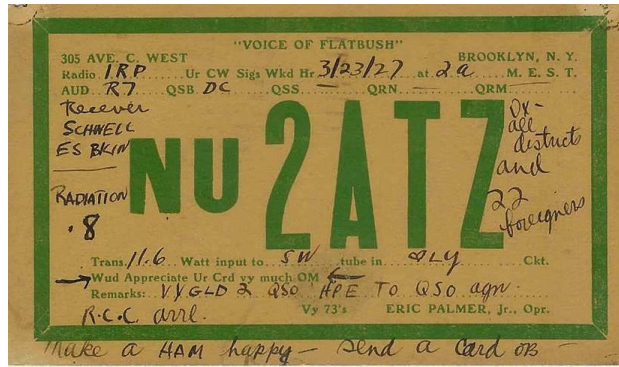
Sample QSL Cards

In 1925 the Department of Commerce opened up the “**Z**” letter suffix for assignment, and allowed the “**Y**” letter suffixes to be used for educational institutions. Examples of the latter are still in use to this day; Stanford University is often on the air with **W6YX** (originally **6YX**), and down the road San Jose State University is still on the air (since 1928) with the **W6YL** call sign. The “**X**” letter suffix remained for “experimental” stations, and was not released as a 1X2 (ie: **W7XQ**), standard call sign until 1977. Two-by-three letter “**X**” suffix call signs remain to this day reserved for experimental stations. Not exactly as the Convention of 1912 dictated, but better than nothing!

The Pre-War Years, 1927-1941, “Amateur Radio is Here to Stay!”

The Washington Conference / Radio Act of 1927 established formalized US amateur radio bands, and finally put US amateurs under international prefix rules that were loosely established in the international conference of 1913. As a result of this act a new commission was formed, the Federal Radio Commission. The commission was assigned the task of issuing licenses, including amateur radio. Also part of this latest act, the US was finally going to follow the already established International Telegraph Union (ITU) call sign standards.

The ITU standards were upgraded to grant the entire “**K**” prefix to the US, in addition to the existing “**W**” and “**N**” prefixes. (Remember that Germany had the “**KAA**” to “**KCZ**” prefixes issued previously). The Navy was reserved the “**N**” prefix, while starting in 1928 the “**W**” and “**K**” prefixes were authorized for civilian services, such as amateur radio. As new amateur licenses were issued, and old ones were renewed, the “**W**” prefix was simply added to the existing call sign. For example, the call sign of **6UO**, (or the unofficial **nu6UO**), became **W6UO**. The “**K**” prefix at that time was reserved for US possessions, such as Alaska (**K7**), Hawaii, (**K6**), and other islands, such as the Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico (**K4**). (Note that “**A**” block letters were unassigned until 1947, when the US received the “**AA**” through “**AL**” prefixblocks). The US amateur radio call sign had finally taken its modern shape we all know today.

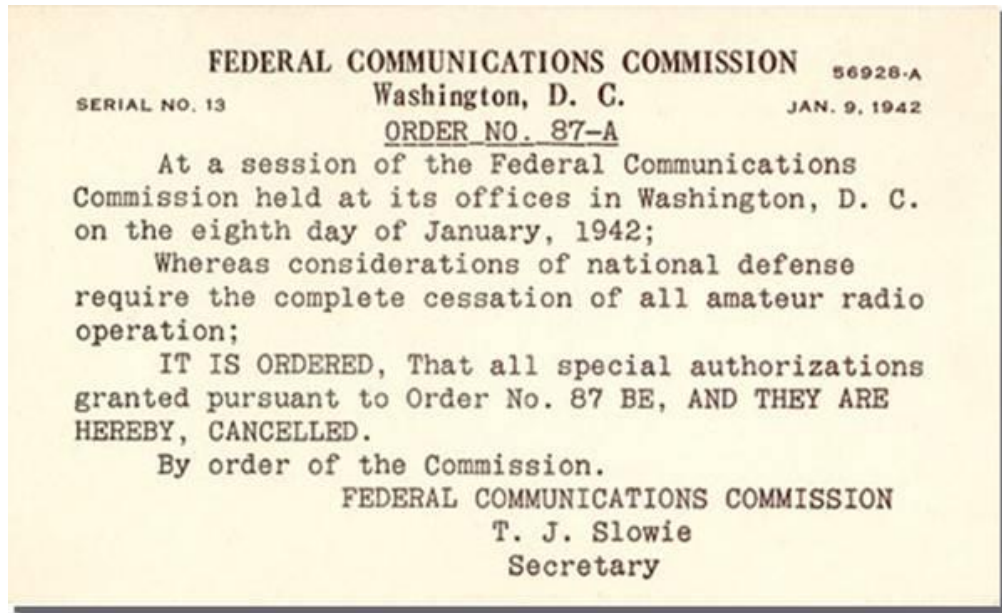


Example: nu2ATZ became W2ATZ

Unrelated to amateur history, (but a question that always seem to arise), is the history of how the US commercial broadcast stations got geographically divided into “K” (for stations West of the Mississippi), and “W” for Eastern stations. This oddity goes back to early Federal Radio Commission regulations, and was originally applied to ships operating either in the Atlantic, (“K” prefixes), or Pacific or Great Lakes area (“W” prefix). Eventually, this was applied to land based commercial stations as well, (but somehow in reverse order), using (with exceptions) a rough line matching the course of the Mississippi river.

In 1933 President Franklin Roosevelt requested the Secretary of Commerce to appoint an interdepartmental committee for studying electronic communications. A recommendation was made by the committee for the establishment of a new agency that would regulate *all* interstate and foreign communication by both wire and radio, plus telegraphy, telephone and broadcast, under one umbrella. This resulted in what became known as the Communications Act of 1934. A key part of this act was the creation of a new federal organization known as the Federal Communications Commission, (FCC) to replace the Federal Radio Commission that was previously established in 1927. Amateur licenses were now moved under this new commission, and this act also created many of the laws that still govern the hobby to this day.

Then, on December 7, 1941, the “day that will live in infamy”, the world of amateur radio was upended for the second time as the US was drawn into the Second World War. All amateur activity was officially suspended January 9th 1942 for the remainder of the war.



The big difference here though, was that the FCC continued to issue, and were allowed to renew, amateur radio *operator* licenses. After all, that gave the government a ready pool of trained and *certified* radio operators and technicians for the war effort. There were no *station* licenses issued, and existing ones were considered revoked. Once again hams were forced to silence their stations but at least this time, unlike the previous war, receivers were still allowed to be used.

This lasted until the war officially ended in September 1945, and shortly afterwards amateurs were granted limited permission to get back on the air in November of 1945 This was with only the ten and two meter bands to start. The US amateurs were back, even if only in a limited capacity at the time.

The Post-War Years, 1945-1975 “The Glory Years of Amateur Radio”

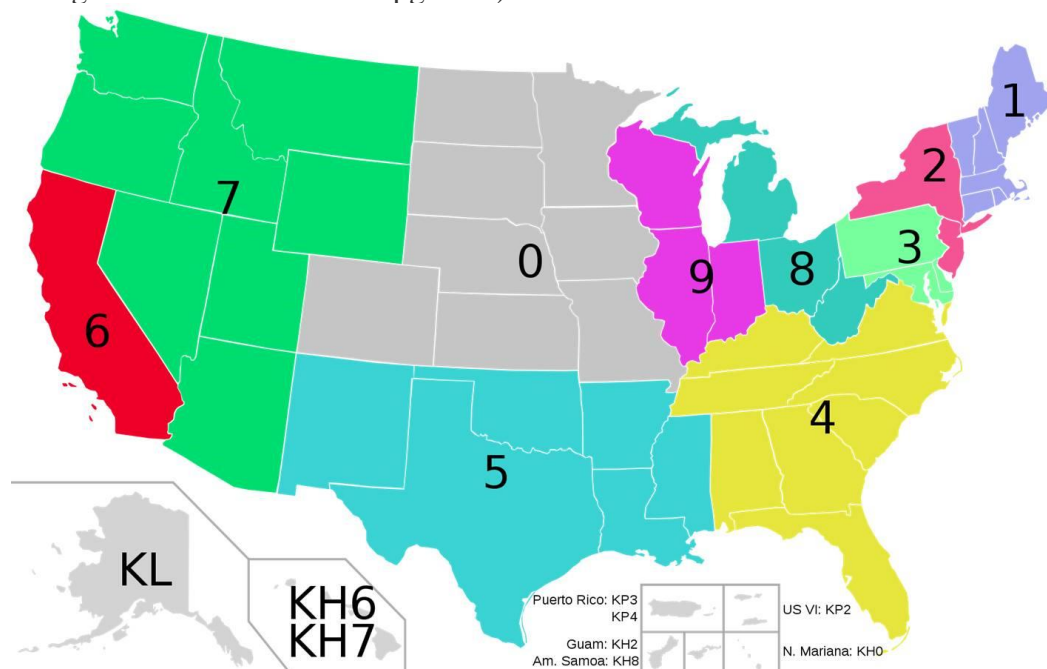
The Atlantic City International Telecommunications Union (ITU) Conference of 1947 (the ITU had changed its name in 1932), reallocated some call sign blocks, and granted a few developing island nations their own prefixes. Meanwhile in the US, the call sign districts were moved around to equalize ham populations.

During the war the Midwest , and West coast industrial centers had greatly increased the amateur radio populations in those areas. As a result, a new 10th call district formed for the central Midwest, allowing Wisconsin, Illinois and Indiana to have the 9th district to themselves. The 6th district was changed to encompass California only. The remaining states that used to be part of the 6th district (Nevada, Arizona and Utah), were moved into the lesser populated 7th district. As licenses were renewed, the new call sign districts were mandated, and often entire call signs changed as a result. A new call was assigned to denote the new district, but one “might” keep their old suffix if it was currently unassigned in the new district. If the suffix was already assigned to somebody in the new district, a new suffix was assigned as well. For example, pioneer Charles Newcombe, **6UO**, in Yerington, Nevada became **W6UO** in 1928, but had to change to **W7VO** when the state became part of the 7th district in 1947 as **W7UO** was

already in use. The rule allowing special call sign suffix dispensation lasted until 1978, when the systematic call signs program began. (More on that program later.)

Also at this time US Possessions had own unique prefixes assigned, ie: **KP4** for Puerto Rico, **KH6** for Hawaii, and **KL7** for Alaska.

In 1951 there was a big push to create an “entry level” amateur radio license, so in response the FCC created a new Novice amateur radio license class. This originally was a one year, non-renewable, low power, and CW only license. These new “novices” were assigned either a **WN** or a **KN** prefix, but the “N” would be dropped from the call sign once the licensee upgraded. (For example, new novice **WN7XYZ** would get a new call sign of **W7XYZ** once he upgraded.). When the FCC ran out of “**KN**” and “**WN**” call signs, they began issuing “**WV**” prefixes for novices, which became “**WA**” or “**WB**” prefix calls when upgraded. US Possessions used “**W**” for the first letter of the novice prefix, (ie: **WH6ABC** to denote a novice call sign, which changed to **KH6ABC** when upgraded).



Modern US Call Districts, post 1947

Another interesting thing happened at the same time. Another new class of license was created, called the “Technician” class. It was a new VHF/UHF/microwave (220 MHz and higher) licensed designed to encourage experimental exploration of these frequencies, (but not intended as a communicators license!) The call sign assignments for the Technician class license followed the same rules as all of the other amateur classes, except Novice. Since Novice and Technician privileges didn’t overlap, it was possible to hold two different call signs at the same time. There was also another rule that if an amateur had homes, (such as a “snowbird”), in two different FCC districts, he or she could hold call signs that reflected the numbers of both districts. So, technically, one amateur could potentially hold four amateur call signs simultaneously! It is unknown whether anybody ever took advantage of this loophole, but it *was* technically possible. When the Novice license was upgraded, the Technician license was forfeited, as the General class already included all Technician privileges. This system was in force until sometime in the 1960’s.

As the number of licensed amateur operators greatly increased in the boom years following the war, “W” prefix call signs started to run out, so starting in 1947 the first “K” prefix calls began to appear in the continental US. By 1953 most districts were issuing them, and some still were until 1964. (The 9th call district area was reportedly the first to implement the new “K” prefix)

By the late 50’s/early 60’s all of the possible combinations of 1X3 format “K” were all assigned in some districts, so “WA” and “WB” (2X3 format) call signs started appearing. “WB” call signs were issued from 1965 to 1975, but in the mid 1970’s some districts were also running out of “WB” calls, so the FCC began recycling old “WA” calls that were expired or otherwise unused in the system. (The author’s first call sign was one of these, **WA6HKP**). The amateur ranks were filling up fast!

However, the recycling of old call signs was not new when they began reissuing unused “WA” call signs. Starting in 1966, (and until 1977), Extra Class licensees, licensed for 25 years or more, could apply for unused 1X2 call signs.

The Modern Era, 1975 to Present “Things get complicated”

The issuance of the recycled call signs was a lot of extra work for the FCC, so it began issuing new “WD” prefix call signs in the 8th, 9th and 10th area call districts, starting around 1976. (In 1978 the “WD” prefix was replaced with the “KA” prefix, as systematic licensing was put into place). But what happened to the “WC” prefix, which logically should have come after “WB”? The answer is; those prefixes were reserved for Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service (RACES) stations at the time. VHF and UHF club owned repeaters also had their own 2X3 format call signs issued, starting with the “WR” prefix. At least one “WT” (**WT6AAA**) call sign is known to have been issued in the 1970’s, as a “temporary” call after a FCC mix-up denied a prospective amateur’s new license. (He had the same first and last names as somebody who previously had their license revoked, and once cleared up a temporary license was issued until the standard license could be processed).

In 1975 the FCC released special 1x1 call signs for special event stations, choice 1x2, and “AA-AL” and “N” prefix call signs. Starting in 1977 the 25 year licensing requirement was dropped for Extra Class upgrades to unused 1X2 call signs, and in addition, the 1X2 “N” (ie: **N1AA**) prefix call signs were added to the mix. Also, the new 2X2 “AA-AL” prefixes (ie: **AA7CR**) became available for Extra class licensees. There were certainly a lot of new “Extra Class only” call signs to choose from, and many licensees took advantage of the opportunity!

However, just as things seemed to be running smoothly for the issuance of call signs, in early 1977 a FCC employee at the 3rd District office in Gettysburg, PA was indicted for taking bribes offered by amateurs wanting special call signs, and who did not have the license class to be awarded the change, (among other issues). This unfortunate event resulted in the termination of all then informal FCC processes for issuing call signs. The new rules implemented on February 23, 1978 required that all amateur call signs must be issued only by the "systematic" process as specified in the rules. No specific call signs could be assigned; call signs were instead assigned consecutively, via a computer database.

There were a few other sweeping changes:

- Amateurs were no longer required to change their call sign when moving to a new district.
- Secondary, Repeater, Control, and Auxiliary Station licenses were discontinued
- Call signs were now going to be assigned by Groups, and by license class

The Groups were defined as:

Group A -- Amateur Extra Class

Contains all “K”, “N” and “W” 1x2, most 2x1, and most "AA-AK" prefixed 2x2 call signs

Group B -- Advanced Class

Contains most “K”, “N”, and “W” prefixed 2x2 call signs

Group C -- Technician & General Class, (and later, the Technician Plus Class)

Contains all “N” 1x3 call signs. Unassigned “W” and “K” prefixed 1x3 call signs are not issued under the sequential call sign system, but are available under the later Vanity call sign system

Group D -- Novice Class

Contains most “K” and “W” prefixed 2x3 call signs. The letter “X” may not be the first digit of the suffix.

Note that no provision had been made for the issuance of AA-AL and NA-NZ prefixed 2x3 call signs, and these call signs are not currently issued to anyone.

In 1995 the Vanity “for a price” program opens, consisting of four “gates”:

Gate 1: 5/31/96, for those amateurs that had held a call before, or eligible for “in memoriam” calls

7/22/96, for Club station trustees that were eligible for “in memoriam” calls

Gate 2: 9/23/96, Amateur Extra requests

Gate 3: 8/6/97, Advanced Class requests

Gate 4: 12/2/97, Everybody else

So now we have the full history of the ham radio call sign, from the infancy days of amateur radio, until the present day. What does the future hold for our call signs? Who knows? Eventually, the “N” and “A” 2X3 call sign formats will have to come into play as the “K” and “W” prefixes run out. There also have been other ideas floated out there that include authorizing a mixture of letters and numbers for Extra class call signs, similar to what is in use in Europe. (ie: W71VO), or even the “sale” of 1X1 call signs to Extras, now reserved for special event stations.

In conclusion, please take the time to appreciate the past efforts and tenacity our forefathers, and especially the gallant early efforts of the ARRL, had to ensure that the hobby we all enjoy as radio amateurs even exists today. Our unique call signs define who we are as amateurs, and have from the start. Please remember to take good care of our special call sign heritage for future generations of amateurs.

73;

Mike Ritz, W7VO

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From your Editor:

I would like to extend my personal thanks to Mike Ritz, W7VO, for his generous permission to include his outstanding article in the August, 2017 CARA Capers.

About W7VO, the Author. Source: QRZ.com

"SEMPER QRO" from W7VO, located near the bustling metropolis (not!) of Scappoose in Columbia County, Oregon. Mike is a founding member and trustee for the Columbia River DX Club, (CRDXC), and currently serves as president of the Willamette Valley DX Club (WVDXC). He is also an Assistant Emergency Coordinator (AEC) with ARES, and is an ARRL registered Volunteer Examiner.





Recently retired from the Silicon Valley high tech telecom industry, Mike started his ham life just out of high school as **WA6HKP** in 1974 while living in Northern California. In 1983 he received his Extra Class ticket, and was assigned **KW6C**. When he and his wife Shelley (**W7VOX**) moved to Oregon in 2007 he changed to **WA7MR** as a temporary call until he was finally assigned **W7VO** in 2008.

The **W7VO** callsign has been traced back to the early 1920's and information on previous holders can be found [HERE](#).

The semi-rural located 3 operating position station is used primarily for single-op or multi-single contesting efforts. Normal contest configuration is a Yaesu FT-2000 and/or FT-1000D with AL-1500 or LK-500ZC amps. The third operating position is dedicated to vintage equipment, including a Sherwood equipped Drake C line with a SB-200 amp, and a small assortment of "boat anchors".

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1QI - W1QI

*This story would be incomplete without mentioning the origin and early days of 1QI, which then became W1QI - CARA's club callsign. W1QI was **first** issued to Walter J. Munzer, 90 years ago - in 1927.*

1QI – Vincent St. James. Pittsfield, MA. Circa 1913-1916

1QI – Conant Manning, Phillips-Andover Academy. Andover, MA. 1920

1QI – Ellery E. Estes, Brockton, MA 1923. Licensed for 25W transmitter power; Source: government records.

W1QI – Walter J. Munzer, Lone Trout Farm, Ridgefield, CT. Walter held this call from 1927 until the Summer of 1969 – Source: 1927-1969 Amateur Callbooks

W1QI – Re-issued in 1969 to the Candlewood Amateur Radio Association in honor and in memory of Walter Munzer, one of CARA's founders and Charter Members.

W1QI Trustees:

First Trustee: Bruce King, W1CSM

RFD3, West Redding CT from Fall, 1969 to Winter, 1974. Bruce was also CARA's president from 1972 until 1974, when he moved to MA. It was wonderful to see Bruce and Sally – W1GDW, his XYL again in 2014 when they visited the CARA FD site at Putnam Park.

Second Trustee: Ken Gleszer – W1KAY(sk), 23 Old Neversink Rd., Danbury. From 1974 to Winter, 1983.

Third Trustee: Dan Fegley – W1QK, Brookfield. Winter, 1983 – present.



YCCC News

The next scheduled meeting of the Yankee Clipper Contest Club will be at the ARRL New England Division Convention in Boxboro, MA on September 9.

Member and Station News:

Your story could go here in the next Issue of CARA Capers. Contact W1QK, Capers Editor

For Sale:

Alpha Power –

Alpha 99 High Performance Amplifier

Alpha 99 high performance HF amplifier. 10-160 Meters including WARC bands. Manual tuning. Wired for 240 VAC. Uses two 4CX800 tubes. Full power (1500 watts) output with 55 watts input. This amp is clean both inside and out. The amp was purchased from Alpha in 2002. SN 9902240255. There are no scratches, no rubbed-off lettering, or dents in the case. This is a one-owner amplifier. Non-smoking environment. There are no mods. Included with the amp is a factory operating manual. Includes two new spare matched Svetlana 4CX800 tubes in unopened boxes with receipt. Extra spare parts also included. This amplifier will NOT be shipped - however, original cartons are included. Inspection, demonstration, and local pickup in South Salem, NY. No trades. Being sold by the XYL of WA2EVH (sk). Call to make an appointment to check out this awesome amplifier. Pictures available to email. Serious potential buyers please. Asking \$3200. (914) 548-2040.



NOTICE TO CAPERS READERS

CAPERS is an important aspect of our club.

It's time for **more participation** with this publication.

CAPERS is looking for ANY and ALL input.

Don't be shy, just send a few words, a picture, link, or short message to Dan Fegley, your Editor:

w1qk@snet.net

CAPERS deadline for input:

LAST Friday of the Month preceding the meeting.

CAPERS will be released:

Monday before the scheduled Friday monthly meeting – or earlier if possible.

73.