



CAPERS

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

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Issue: March 2005

Friday, March 11 at 8 p.m.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

It is a pleasure to report that all had a good time at last month's meeting. The program was provided by Steve McGee of QRP Labs. He discussed kit building and QRP operation.

The spring months are busy for ham radio and CARA. The March VE exam will be held on Saturday, March 5 at 11:30 a.m. at the church. This is your chance to upgrade if you have already not done so. The NE QSO party will be held the first weekend in May. CARA will operate at W1AW on Sunday during the NE QSO Party. We will need operators. I encourage newer hams to participate in the W1AW operation. Elections are coming in June and the nomination committee is being formed.

Please think of serving CARA as an officer next year.

BPL is now in Shelton, Connecticut. John, W1JMA will be asking for help with monitoring BPL signals and writing letters. Unless you want S9+ noise at your QTH in the future, please lend a hand. This month's program will be on emergency communication operations and will be presented by Bill, N1PJG. I look forward to seeing you at the meeting.

73 de Frank, N8WXQ

Meetings

CARA's regular meetings are held on the second Friday of each month beginning at 8

p.m., at St. Paul's Church Hall, Brookfield Center, CT. Informal "rag chewing" begins at 7:30 p.m.

Contact Your Legislators About PRB-1 Bill

The effort to get PRB-1 antenna structure bills passed in CT continues. Senate bill SB 92 has been referred to the joint committee on energy and technology. This is a bill that affects every ham in Connecticut. If you have not already contacted your state representative and senator about this bill, please do so immediately. Have questions? Need more information? Contact Mike K1MK at k1mk@arrl.net

Volunteers Needed to Monitor BPL Activity in CT

By now it's no surprise to our membership that BPL testing is underway in CT – so this is no longer "a problem" limited to out-of-state hams in rural locations. John, W1JMA, and a group of volunteers are assisting as members of an action group called together by Section Manager Betsey K1EIC. This group will be monitoring signal strength and interference in order to gather hard numbers and concrete examples that can be used as evidence that BPL is interfering to an unacceptable degree with licensed amateur radio activities. Additional volunteers are needed, particularly if you have a mobile HF rig, to assist in this monitoring effort. If you can help, please contact John, W1JMA, at w1jma@arrl.net.

ARES EC Seminar Draws Large Turnout; "Topoff" Discussed



More than 60 hams from Connecticut area towns and neighboring Massachusetts turned out for the February 26 ARES (Amateur Radio Emergency Services)



Seminar and your editor was fortunate enough to be among them.

Held at the Newington CT firehouse on Main Street, the day-long program featured



presentations on directed and tactical nets by Rod Lane N1FE, message handling procedures by Don Brochu KY1F, a review of the Red Cross "Introduction to Disaster" by Don Izzo N1HAX, and the National Incident Management System, by SEC Chuck Rexroad AB1CR, who also hosted much of the day's program.

Dave Hyatt, K1DAV covered the work involved in building an effective "Go Kit" and keeping it at-the-ready and the back of the room featured half a dozen or more finished

Go Kits – a kind of “show and tell” courtesy of some of the hams attending. Pictures of some of these kits appear in this issue.



Our own Section Manager Betsey Doane, K1EIC, delivered introductory remarks to the group and the ARRL’s new Chief Operating Officer, Harold Kramer, WJ1B, also attended the day’s program. A reporter from the Hartford Courant also attended most of the day and interviewed a number of the attendees. Excerpts from the very positive Hartford Courant story that appeared on Sunday February 27 follow this article.

As might be expected, a good deal of the day’s program centered about general preparations for the April Topoff drill. Support staff are needed in many rolls for this major

week-long event which kicks-off April 4th – by some estimates up to 25 operators a day for both AM and PM shifts. Additional details can be found on the ctares.org web site

ARES Seminar Covered in Hartford Courant

(The following is an excerpt of an article that appeared in the Hartford Courant on Sunday, February 27 –Ed.)

NEWINGTON -- Before ham radio operators can assist victims of bombs, plane crashes and smallpox outbreaks, they have to train.

And so, about 60 hams, as they are called, gathered in the Newington Fire Department's headquarters on Main Street Saturday morning to review, discuss and prepare.

The hams, also known as amateur radio operators, are members of Amateur Radio Emergency Services, a national program of the American Radio Relay League, whose national headquarters are in Newington.

"Training, everything we do is about training. We have to be ready to serve," said Rod Lane, one of the speakers on Saturday and an assistant section manager for ARES. "In a post-9/11 world, it's even more important."

Amateur radio operators set up and operate organized communication networks locally for government officials and emergency services. They are usually most active when power outages and downed telephone lines render other communication ineffective.

According to Allen Pitts, a spokesman for the league, amateur radio, unlike other forms of communication, can never be blocked or tied up.

"Ninety-five percent of other emergency communication services go through some type of a choke point," Pitts said, naming emergency dispatch and cell phone towers

as examples. "There's always something. If that something is overloaded or dysfunctional, the system's dead."

However, Pitts said, every amateur radio is self-contained and fully functional on its own, so there's never any "choke point."

Dozens of radio operators came from all over the state to Newington Saturday to prepare for Top Off, an emergency disaster drill run by the federal Department of Homeland Security. The drill will take place in Connecticut, New Jersey and foreign countries. The radio operators will learn how to assist the Red Cross and the Office of Emergency Management during emergencies.

Pitts said the drill is scheduled for April 4-8 in the New London and Groton areas and will be the biggest disaster drill ever in Connecticut.

Anything can happen during those four days, he said. The Department of Homeland Security was planning on replicating anything that terrorists could cause.

The speakers talked about several important factors of being a radio operator. For instance, everyone should have a jump kit - a mini-radio station that operators have handy in an emergency. Several jump kits were on display in the back of the room. The speakers also discussed staying calm in emergencies and where to buy materials. During breaks, people traded barbs and experiences.

Pitts said that amateur radio operators are key in all disasters, but they are no amateurs: "It's called the amateur radio service but it's no more amateur than your amateur volunteer fire services."

Low Power is High Profile at February CARA Meeting

CARA members attending the February meeting got the lowdown on low-power ham

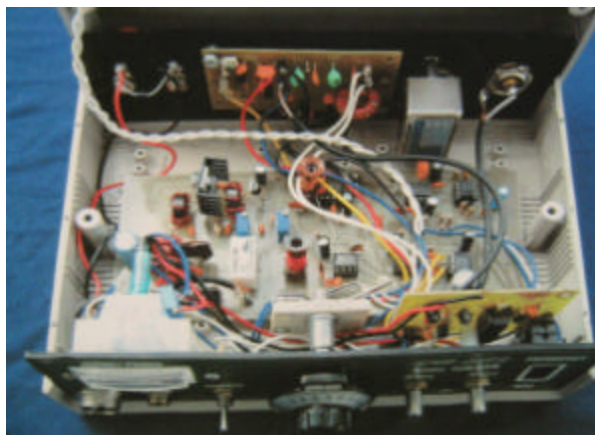
radio from Steve McGee WA1PDF, whose company, QRP Labs, produces some innovative QRP transceiver kits. Named for



the CW term for "reduce power", QRP generally refers to any transmission that's accomplished with 5 watts of power or less. For consistently reliable communication, that often means using CW, but when band



conditions are good, worldwide SSB contacts using 5 watts or less are not uncommon. Steve recalled one 4X1 contact with a ham in Russian-occupied Antarctica that was made on 20M with under 5 watts. Steve and his



son Joe brought along an example of one of their QRP kits and passed along some tips on kit-building. Pictures from last month's meeting and the kit demonstrated appear in this month's issue of the Capers.

Steve recommended that first time kit builders start with a smaller, simpler device to practice their assembly and soldering skills. He recommends a cadmium-tipped solder tip (not copper which collects dirt) and no-clean solder with no flux residue.

Steve estimates a reasonably-experienced kit builder could finish one of his QRP transceivers in 25 hours working a few hours a night. Instructions are detailed and there are many checkpoints along the way. No complicated test gear is needed to align finished kits, usually just a VOM. Not only is there a special sense of pride in building your own radio, but Steve points out that you get to know your radio's operation in great detail and learn more about the ham radio hobby.

Some tips on QRP operating from Steve:
-- The difference in signal strength from 100W to 5W is about 13dB. Not that great, but you do have to listen carefully and wait for the right opportunity to make and complete a contact. That adds to the fun.
-- A high-gain antenna helps, as does quality coax and connectors to minimize signal loss.
-- Daytime work higher frequencies 14 Mhz and up; night time 10 Mhz and down.
-- If you have a directional antenna, aim east in the morning, south at mid-day and west in the evening.

Information about QRP labs and the kits they offer can be found at www.qrplabs.com.

Final Year for EmComm Grant

Registration for the ARRL Amateur Radio Emergency Communications Level I on-line course (EC-001) opens Monday, March 07, 2005, at 1201 AM EST and will remain open until all available seats have been filled or through the March 12-13 weekend --whichever comes first.

Class begins Friday, March 25. Radio amateurs 55 and up are strongly encouraged to participate.

Thanks to our grant sponsors--the Corporation for National and Community Service and the United Technologies Corporation--the \$45 registration fee paid upon enrollment will be reimbursed after successful completion of the course. During this registration period, seats are being offered to ARRL members on a first-come, first-served basis. To learn more, visit the ARRL Certification and Continuing Education Web page "<http://www.arrl.org/cce>". For more information, contact Emergency Communications Course Manager Dan Miller, K3UFG, 860-594-0340 or send your query to <<mailto:cce@arrl.org>>

CARA Standing Committees

Just a reminder to all members that these are the standing committees that help make CARA run. Our members and their ideas are our strength. Sign up for one of these committees in 2005 if you have not already done so. Talk to any of the club officers at Friday's meeting!

Repeater and Digital Equipment

- Repeater coordination
- Repeater maintenance
- Packet cluster maintenance
- Other digital equipment

Operating Activities

- Field Day- June 2005
- New England QSO Party – May 2005
- WACC
- Special event station or fall contest

Hamfest

- Plan and organize – September 2005
- Publicity

Membership

- Annual dues notification and follow up
- Annual new member drive

Education and Elmering

- Organize or sponsor class for entry-level license
- Organize Elmer support network for new hams
- Organize two 3-person ARES deployment teams

Program Committee

- Organize and arrange monthly program Staff and Net Control for Sunday 7:30 p.m. CARA net
- CARA CAPERS newsletter

Nets

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

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

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

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

ConnARES Area One (North) VHF Net: 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).

CARA VE exam schedule for 2005:

Make a note of the CARA-sponsored Volunteer Exam (VE) schedule for 2005:

Saturday, March 5

Saturday, June 4

Saturday, September 17

Saturday, December 3

VE sessions are held at St. Paul's Church in Brookfield Center, the site of our regular

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

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

Info on Proposed Morse Changes for License Requirements

The FCC continues to work toward developing a Notice of Proposed Rule Making (NPRM) that will spell out what the Commission has in mind with respect to possible changes in the current Morse code requirement and Amateur Radio licensing.

A total of 18 petitions have been filed, including one from the ARRL, seeking Part 97 rule changes addressing the future of the 5 WPM Morse requirement (Element 1) and revisions to the overall Amateur Radio licensing structure. The FCC plans to tackle all 18 in a single proceeding. As far as the code issue is concerned, petitions--and comments in response to them--run the gamut from retaining or even beefing up the Morse requirement to eliminating it altogether. (The ARRL's proposal would retain the 5 WPM Morse examination for Amateur Extra class applicants only.)

The League and others have also put forth proposals for a new entry-level Amateur Radio license class. At this point, personnel in the FCC Wireless Telecommunications Bureau are continuing to review the thousands of comments filed on the 18 petitions.

While the FCC appears unlikely to release an NPRM any sooner than mid-year, the issue still may be a major topic at the FCC Forum at Dayton Hamvention, May 20-22. Once public, the NPRM would initiate another round of comments on what the FCC has proposed. It could be late 2006 or even into 2007 before the FCC releases a Report and Order to implement any new rules, although it's possible the Commission could wrap up the proceeding before then.

Membership Renewal/Dues Form in this Month's Issue of the Capers

Please see the membership renewal and dues form for 2005-2006 in this month's issue of the Capers. You can bring the completed form and your check to Friday's meeting, or mail it to John W1JMA at the address indicated on the form. In addition to supporting your club and its activities, your dues entitle you to receive the CARA CAPERS each month, and to place no-cost ads for ham-related equipment you'd like to buy or sell.

Amateur Radio Military Appreciation Day

By Rudi Williams / American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON, Feb. 16, 2005 Ham radio operators and amateur radio clubs plan to "Ham It Up for the Troops" on May 28 during the second annual Amateur Radio Military Appreciation Day to thank active duty, veterans and retired military people for their service and sacrifices to the nation, according to ARMAD's founder and former Air Force sergeant Emery McClendon.

"ARMAD is a day when all amateur radio operators and amateur radio clubs worldwide are invited to gather at public locations to allow our citizens to express words of thanks and appreciation to our military members and coalition forces in a

live format," said McClendon, who founded and established ARMAD in Fort Wayne, Ind., almost a year ago.

"The original purpose of ARMAD was to encourage amateurs worldwide to use our hobby to express thanks as a public service for those that serve in the military, including active duty, veterans and retirees," said the former aircraft refueler. "We also wanted to allow their families to support one another with words of encouragement by contacting other ARMAD locations."

Ham radio operators set up in public locations such as shopping centers, parks, Veterans Affairs hospitals and sporting events to express verbal positive support "live" over the radio for active duty military people, members of the reserve components, veterans, family members and military support groups, McClendon said.

ARMAD is associated with National Military Appreciation Month and is being held during the weekend of Memorial Day, a day of remembrance for those who have died in the nation's service.

This year, amateur radio operators will participate from several states -- Florida, California, Washington, Ohio, Michigan, Louisiana, Colorado, Texas, North and South Carolina and others. Operators in several foreign countries also are slated to participate, including Australia, Greece, Kuwait and England, and members of the Iraq Amateur Radio Club are expected to join in as well, according to McClendon.

"We expect many others, including ships and military hospitals, as we approach the event date," he said. "Last year, we had more than 25 different groups in the U.S. and about 15 foreign countries participating in ARMAD," McClendon noted. "We expect participation to triple for the 2005 event. We've had great response just by word of mouth. With publicity, we will grow, and reach many more troops and communities."

McClendon emphasized that ARMAD is not affiliated with the Military Affiliate Radio System in any way, except that many MARS operators are amateur radio operators. But MARS plays an active role in ARMAD.

Additional information:

<http://www.freewebs.com/kb9ibw/>

(Several items in this month's newsletter courtesy ARRL Letter and KZ1Z)

TIARA Presents Award for Heroic On-Air Ham Radio Activity

TOKYO. An Indian ham radio operator has been named recipient of the 2nd Annual Lynch Memorial Award, given by the Tokyo International Amateur Radio Association.

Bharati Prasad, VU2RBI, recently became famous in the ham world for her DX'pedition to Andaman Island after 14 years of wrangling with Indian bureaucrats. Shortly after that, she became widely known outside the amateur radio community in India and abroad for her heroic work on-air in the aftermath of the Indian Ocean tsunami.

Ms. Prasad has been a ham for more than two decades and is a founding member of the National Institute of Amateur Radio (NIAR), the premier institution in promoting Amateur Radio activities in India.

She has provided ham radio communications at many events including the Asian Games and has helped local administrations with relief work after numerous disasters.

An emergency radio communication network was developed by NIARA, with Ms. Prasad's help, in coastal districts of Andhra Pradesh utilizing World Bank aid.

Ms. Prasad has been instrumental in

promoting several different ham clubs in India. She was the secretary for Rajiv Gandhi Foundation Amateur Radio Club for three years and has been working as an Honorary Wireless Adviser for Bharath Scouts & Guides.

Even before her trip to Andaman, Bharati had been working on a project with CARE-India in the disaster management unit for promoting emergency communication through ham radio.

The Lynch Award is named for the late Sandy M. Lynch, W7BX and 7J1ABV, a longtime TIARA member. The award is given annually to one ham in the world who exemplifies Sandy's dedication to the hobby and his personality.

Got News?

Have an article for publication? Want to place a classified ad in the Capers? Contact the editor, Barry, KA1JDD, at ka1jdd@arrl.net, or call 203-748-1033.

**Remember to renew
your 2005 membership!
Complete the attached renewal form
today.**



Candlewood Amateur Radio Association

P.O. Box 3441
Danbury, CT 06813

Membership Application

Name: _____ Call: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____

Class: _____ Phone: _____ VE: _____ ARRL: _____ Email Capers: ___x___

e-mail _____

DUES:

Associate Member (non-ham)
\$15 _____

Full Member \$30 _____

Senior/Student (>65 yrs/ <18yrs)
\$23.50 _____

Family (2 members) \$52.50 _____

Family (3 members) \$65.00 _____

Family (4 members) \$75.00* _____

Send Dues to:

John M. Ahle W1JMA
120 Fire Hill Road
Ridgefield, CT 06877
W1JMA@aol.com

* \$10 each additional member