



Capers

October 2009

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

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

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Secretary – Bill Thoren – N1TIW - Phone – 203-744-5138
Treasurer – Bill Webb – W1AFX - phone - 203-775-0536



**Meeting: Friday, October 9, 8 p.m.
Stony Hill Fire Station**

From the President

I hope all had pleasant summer that included some fun ham radio experiences such as portable operation or visiting a radio museum.

September is a busy month for CARA. Our monthly meeting will be September 11. K1MK will present a program concerning the 100th anniversary of the MIT Amateur Radio Association. The April issue of QST contains K1MK's article on this subject. The MIT club was a club that contributed much to radio technology in the early days of radio. You might recall that T.O.M. was a member of this club.

The following day will be the VE exam so if you have not yet upgraded to Extra this is a chance to upgrade. The members of the VE team are also greatly appreciated for

their assistance to the amateur radio community.

After you have upgraded, the Western Connecticut Hamfest, sponsored by CARA, will be held on Sunday so you will be able to buy new toys to go along with your upgrade. Please attend the Hamfest and help with the setup and teardown as well as the various

duties that occur during the Hamfest. Help the club have a successful event. This is CARA's annual fundraising activity. Please, also encourage your ham radio friends to attend.

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

73 de Frank, N8WXQ

CARA Hamfest a Great Success!

Many thanks to Joe, AB1DO, and his team for a very successful 2009 CARA Hamfest.

Thanks, also, to the many club members who turned out at the Edmond Town Hall to help with setup, ticket sales, the food concession, seminars, the Fox Hunt, the tailgate section, the raffles and take-down and cleanup. Once again, the deep cycle batteries were a big hit and sold out fast.

If you were unable to help out at this year's event, please make a point of signing up next year. The Hamfest is great fun but it's also a great deal of work and the club's only major fundraiser for the year. The more club members who help, the more the work can be spread around. We'd all like to have a chance to browse the vendor tables or ragchew with friends. And if everyone pitches in and takes on a job, for just a little part of the day, we'll all have a chance to do just that.

[For some photos from this year's events, check out the pages of this month's CAPERS.](#)

Baluns and Eggs, Anyone?

Bill, N1TIW, notes that many clubs around the country have informal, social breakfast meetings at a local restaurant or diner for both members and guests.

Aside from the fun of getting together, it can also be a great way to introduce a prospective new member to ham radio and talk about what we do. The restaurant and the day of the week chosen would depend on what works best for those club members interested.

Bill is willing to be the contact person to help set this up if enough folks are interested. Drop him a note at wttthoren@sbcglobal.net

And thanks, Bill, for a terrific idea!

Welcome New Members!

A hearty welcome to the newest members of CARA:

Roger Mitchell, KB1STT
Jim Mangi, KB1SPA
Deborah Isaacson
Alex Isaacson
Elaine Isaacson

We're looking forward to seeing you at our meetings and events, getting to know you better, and hearing your ideas for how we can improve the club!

Last CARA VE session for 2009

- Saturday, December 5th

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—pre-registration is not required. But if you know you will be attending a session a “heads up” e-mail or phone call is always appreciated.

By the way, extra helping hands are always appreciated at license test events. If you're free on one or more exam dates please give Frank a call.

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

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

Reserve November for 2009 SET

ARRL Field Organization leaders are planning an event that will actively involve members of the Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES), the Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service (RACES), the ARRL National Traffic System (NTS) and many other related groups that prepare for and respond to emergencies. Public service agencies and organizations in our communities, ARRL Section and state will also be invited to participate.

In our area, the SET is scheduled to take place on one of the first three weekends in November. Date to come.



ARRL Field Organization officials in our area and Section are planning the simulated emergency scenarios that will be used

during the SET event. These scenarios are designed to help gain valuable operating experience, or to practice what you have learned previously or to put your Amateur Radio Emergency Communications Course training into action.

In any emergency -- real or simulated -- a number of public service or public safety agencies and organizations are often also involved in the response.

The SET is a great chance to demonstrate the capabilities of Amateur Radio in the community and beyond. For more information on whom the ARRL maintains a National Memoranda of Understanding with, check this page <http://www.arrl.org/FandES/field/mou/>. Guidelines and specific SET reporting forms for ARRL Section and Field Leaders will be posted online <http://www.arrl.org/FandES/field/forms/>. Please report SET activities to your Section Leaders and to HQ.

(Some articles courtesy ARRL Letter)

Changes in Store for ARRL Letter

After asking for feedback from ARRL Letter subscribers and reviewing surveys sent to its members, ARRL is changing the way members receive The ARRL Letter. Starting next week -- October 1 -- The ARRL Letter will be available to subscribers in an HTML formatted version. Each message will contain both an HTML and a plain-text version of the Letter, and the recipient's mail program can choose which version to display. For members who prefer a plain-text version of the Letter, there will be simple instructions on the ARRL Letter Web page that describe how to view the plain-text version in some of the more common mail programs.

According to ARRL News Editor S. Khrystyne Keane, K1SFA, this new format will allow for more graphics and pictures, as

well as occasional articles that feature the technical side of Amateur Radio. We will also be running portions of popular QST features, such as "The Doctor Is IN" and "Hints & Kinks."

"I am very excited about presenting The ARRL Letter in a completely new format," Keane said. "Not only will we be able to add features such as pictures and video, but by offering the Letter in HTML, readers will be able to navigate directly to those stories they are most interested in. The ARRL already offers two other newsletters -- The ARRL Contest Update and The ARRL ARES E-Letter -- in an HTML version. We have received a lot of positive feedback on these two newsletters."

The ARRL Letter first appeared in 1981 as a print publication, available by subscription from the League. In 1991 -- following the technology of the day -- it moved from being a print publication to being published electronically and sent via e-mail as a free service to ARRL members.

"Now, once again, we at the ARRL are following technology's path and publishing The ARRL Letter in a new way, moving from plain text to a graphically pleasing interface," Keane explained.

The ARRL expects members will enjoy this new format, and welcomes comments. Note what you like -- and don't like -- by sending an e-mail to Keane <k1sfa@arrl.org>, with "ARRL Letter Feedback" in the subject line.

Gene, KL7CE in QST!

Congratulations to Gene, KL7CE, on his feature article, "The KL7CE No Holes Mobile Installation," which appears in the October issue of QST Magazine.

Gene's article, which begins on page 39, is a detailed, step-by-step look at how to

install your radio gear, computer and antennas in your vehicle without drilling it full of holes, damaging the paint or otherwise trashing your chariot!

Gene's writing talent comes to the fore as he explains how to cleverly mount gear, route cables and fasten antennas so they'll stay put even in a full-sized 4x4 bouncing over less-than-perfect terrain -- and all without drilling holes in your car's sheet metal. He also includes a generous number of detailed photos to help drive home his points.

The first page of the article appears in this month's CAPERS. The entire article is available in the October issue of QST, and in the future may be available for download by searching www.arrl.org/members-only/.

Newtown Bee Features CARA Hamfest

Newtown Bee reporter Shannon Hicks attended the CARA 2009 Hamfest and interviewed Joe, AB1DO, and a number of other club members. Her article, "A Good Day for Local Amateur Radio Enthusiasts" appeared in the Friday, September 18, issue of the Bee, on page A-12. There were also several nice photos. A reproduction of the article appears in this month's issue. Thanks to all who hosted the reporter and provided information. Great story and great PR for ham radio -- and CARA!

Have an article for CAPERS?

Or an item to offer FOR SALE?

Send your stories, news, and For Sale articles to the CAPERS editor,
Barry, KA1JDD c/o
barry.connolly@yahoo.com

The KL7CE No Holes Mobile Installation

Your vehicle may be somewhat different, but there are good ideas here for anyone who wants to go mobile.

Gene Gregory, KL7CE

I have always wanted to have a factory style installation of a full ham radio station in my vehicle. Unfortunately, vehicle manufacturers are funny about accommodating the wishes of the amateur community (and others, I suppose). I had been bitten by the mobile radio bug pretty badly and was interested in doing public service (ARES® and EmComm) work as well. I wanted to be able to satisfy as many wants and needs as my wallet could afford. And it all had to fit out of the way and be as clean as possible. I had recently read Jonathan Taylor's product review of sound cards in *QST* and felt that light bulb flip to on.¹ There in the article was the final piece of the puzzle, a USB sound card for my laptop PC. Now to begin.

My wife finally came to her senses, after just a bit of whimpering on my part, in letting me get another truck: "Honey, it has room for the dogs and the kids." So it came to pass that I drove home one day with a newer full sized, four door 4 × 4 as shown in Figure 1. It is amazing how much room there truly was inside. Why, a VHF/UHF rig could go a here, an HF rig there and, hey, a fella could even have room for a dedicated laptop PC. Now to begin.

But wait, how could I possibly drill holes into my new baby? What was I thinking? In my mad rush with a dream of rigs dancing in my head, I forgot one of the cardinal rules for new babies (trucks, that is, and real babies, too, I guess): "Thou Shalt Not Drill." Now what? Well, I have had lots of experience installing stuff in trucks and cars of all sorts. There had to be a way.

So, What Did I Want?

The list of things I was looking for in a mobile station included:

- V/UHF transceivers with PC connectivity.
- HF and 6 meter transceivers with PC connectivity.
- Antennas that work.

¹Notes appear on page 41.

- Computer for running it all.
- USB connectivity.
- Sound card interface for digital mode operation.
- Internet access.
- HF and V/UHF digital modes.
- Global Positioning System (GPS) satellite navigation and reporting.
- Terminal node controller (TNC) for RMS

Packet, *Airmail* and AX.25 packet.

- Printing capability.

We live in an amazing age. Thanks to Moore's law, electronic and radio equipment have become cheaper, small and more feature laden compared to those of earlier generations.² And the Internet is available in my pocket, now. There had to be a way to put it all together.

And so there is! The first task was to pick out the radio equipment to use for the project. It was real pain having to look at all those rigs and evaluating options. What was critical? HF or VHF/UHF? Well, I really wanted it all — or as much as could be packed into a rig or two.

Then, I needed to save space. To me that means radios with a removable control head option. That cut my search down to about 15 or 20. How was I going to use the equipment? Did I want to operate *Airmail*, Packet, PSK31, RTTY, RMS Packet, SSB or CW? How about all of the above?

For an HF transceiver, I chose the Yaesu FT-857D. The FT-857D is very small (small is good in a vehicle) and it has a remote control head, too. It also has the option of a very compact antenna system, the ATAS-120. I decided to go with the Yaesu FT-7800R for my V/UHF transceiver. I considered a VHF transceiver with a built-in TNC, but it was twice the cost and I had a TNC. Oh well. I did need to be able to keep the dogs in kibble and myself out of the dog house.

Now, how about computing and networking? Well this was pretty easy. I ordered an entry level HP laptop. Now, these days, an entry level laptop is a thing of beauty and power. Dual processors, 3 GHz clock speed, lots of memory, DVD burner, built-in wireless and an 80 GB hard drive. All this for my truck — this thing has more processing power than the space shuttle!

For getting it all online, I used a cellular network card that can be configured either for my laptop or, if I need to provide a Wi-Fi hotspot for a remote emergency operations center (EOC), for example, I



Figure 1 — My latest ham radio platform, just waiting for the next trip.

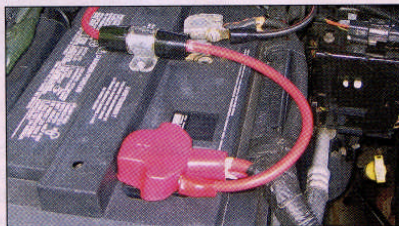


Figure 2 — Connections to the vehicle battery. Note the heavy fuse holder on the positive lead.



Connecticut Section Manager Betsey Doane and Rod Lane, the section's assistant coordinator, represented The American Radio Relay League at a hamfest held at Edmond Town Hall on September 13. —Bee Photos, Hicks

A Good Day For Local Amateur Radio Enthusiasts



A solar powered toy helicopter was set up just outside the gym at Edmond Town Hall last Sunday during an amateur radio operator festival. The helicopter and its vendor, Timothy Vesely, of NorthEast Alternative Energy Systems, Inc, drew attention to the possibilities of solar power.



Newtown residents John Will (left) and Bob Keegan were among those who participated in the Western CT Hamfest at Edmond Town Hall last weekend. Both are members of The Candlewood Amateur Radio Association, which sponsored the event.

By SHANNON HICKS

Ham radio operators and enthusiasts had the opportunity to attend a pair of seminars, shop for new equipment, and network with fellow operators during a HamFest held at Edmond Town Hall on Sunday, September 13.

The Candlewood Amateur Radio Association (CARA) hosted the event, which ran from 8:30 am until 12:30 pm in the town hall's gymnasium as well as the rear parking lot at 45 Main Street. It was sanctioned by the American Radio Relay League, the national organization of amateur radio operators.

Outdoors, tailgaters, vendors, and a pair of special vehicles were all on display in the town hall parking lot. Derby's Officers Emergency Management vehicle was at the show with a team of operators, as was an American Red Cross Emergency Communications Response Vehicle.

There were also between 35-40 tailgaters set up outside, said CARA member Joe de Groot (AB1DO), one of the show's organiz-

ers. The majority of those who attended the show were there during the show's early hours, which made the commercial and tailgating vendors very happy. Five vendors were set up indoors, while the rest were outside in the sunshine.

"Everybody wants to get their early to get the first crack at whatever is being sold, which we saw, and then things died down around 11," said Mr de Groot. "It was such nice weather, so people probably had plans for the afternoon."

"We planned for the show to end by 12:30, and by then a lot of [vendors] had already left," he continued.

"It went fabulously well, though. The vendors were happy, we were very happy, and the weather was terrific."

Indoors, a pair of seminars were included with the \$6 admission fee. The first, at 10 am, was "Travel Ready HF Station, proven on multiple airline flights," presented by Gene Gregory (K77CE). At 11 am, Jonathan Taylor (K1RFD) presented "Internet Linking."

Raffle drawings were held all morning, with many ticket holders picking up hats, T-shirts, books and related amateur radio items. The big prize of the day, however, was a Yaesu FB 2800 — a complete mobile rig — that went to lucky ticket holder Bill Muir.

Betsey Doane, the Connecticut session manager of ARRL, was pleased with the show.

"We had a very good turnout and a lot of good conversation," said Ms Doane, who shared a table with Ron Lane, the assistant section coordinator.

The majority of the people who visited Sunday's show, Mr deGroot said, are not associated with CARA but they were amateur radio operators.

"That makes it a very successful day for us," he said.

CARA's next event will be its annual field day, in June 2010. The club has meetings on a regular basis, however, and a website (Danbury.org/CARA) offers information about its mission and members.

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Thanks to all the CARA members who helped make this year's Hamfest at the Edmond Town Hall such a great success!

