



# Capers

September 2011

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

President – Roger Mitchell – NG1R – phone- 203-790-9697  
Vice President – John Will – KB1LYP- phone - 203-270-0475  
Secretary – Bill Thoren – N1TIW - Phone – 203-744-5138  
Treasurer – Bill Webb – W1AFX - phone - 203-775-0536



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

***From the President:***

August has certainly been an exciting month. Irene has played havoc with many communities along the Atlantic seaboard. The flooding aftermath seems more serious than the storm was itself. I sincerely hope that you all were safe during the storm and did not suffer much damage as a result of it. Our thanks go to the many volunteers who spent hours manning radios at municipal EOCs or other locations requiring communications. It is hard to leave family in the middle of a storm to do volunteer work, but the need is there. There have been widespread power outages, many of which continue as of this writing. Our CARA repeaters lost power and went silent on Sunday evening. We will discuss what we can do in the future to stay on the air longer in similar circumstances.

September is bringing some club activity that we need to focus on. **The weekend of the 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> will be particularly busy. Of course our meeting is on the 9<sup>th</sup>, we have a VE session on the morning of the 10<sup>th</sup> and our hamfest is on the 11<sup>th</sup>.** Please work with Frank and Joe to support these events. In particular lets get anyone who passes one of the license tests to sign up for CARA. Jonathan Taylor has agreed to present Echolink and IRLP at our September meeting. Jonathan is the developer of Echolink so bring all of your questions to the meeting. I look forward to learning much more about these computer/radio links. I will see you soon at the meeting and at the hamfest.

**73, Roger NG1R**

## CARA VE Session Schedule

Exam sessions are held at the Stony Hill Fire Station at 59 Stony Hill Road (Route 6) in Bethel, CT.

Registration begins at **11:30 a.m.** Walk-ins are always welcome. Pre-registration is not required, but is helpful and appreciated.

For further info, contact Frank Sileo, N1PE, in Ridgefield, CT at 203-438-0218 or [frsileo@att.net](mailto:frsileo@att.net).

- **Saturday, Sept 10, 2011**
- **Saturday, Dec 3, 2011**

### **NET CONTROL OPERATORS NEEDED FOR SUNDAY NET!**

Additional volunteer net controllers are still needed for the 7:30 Sunday evening CARA net. Right now, Bill, N1TIW and Harlan W1QH are handling the lion's share of the work. Some additional volunteers – even for one or two Sundays a month – would be appreciated.

Any licensed club member can handle the net. There's a simple script to guide you and it's excellent practice in net operation for ARES work you may be involved in. Contact Harlan or Bill to see how you can help.



## 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., 3.533 (note correction to 3.533)

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

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 +/- on Thursdays @ approx. 6:15 p.m. (following CT Phone Net.)



Sponsored by Candlewood Amateur Radio Association

# Western CT Hamfest



Sanctioned by ARRL

- **Sunday, Sept. 11, 2011**  
(Rain or Shine)
- Edmond Town Hall  
45 Main St (Rt. 6)  
Newtown, CT
- Set-up 7 a.m.
- Doors open 8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

**Talk-in on 147.300+ PL 100**

- Admission \$6 (under 10 free)
- Tables \$15 (includes 1 admission)
- Tailgating \$10 (includes 1 admission)
- Ham Radio Equipment
- Computer Gear
- Door Prizes
- Refreshments
- Free Parking

**Battery Exclusive! Big batteries at rock bottom prices!**

### Commercial Vendors Include (tentative)

- KJI Electronics
- QuickSilver Radio Products
- Sauder Electronics
- Radio Oasis

**Don't Miss the Raffle! Win a New Mobile Rig.**

### Seminars

- Station grounding and lightning protection - Steve Simons W1SMS
- Life of Samuel Morse (incl demo of his sender/receiver) - Bill Thoren N1TIW

### Contact Information

- Joe de Groot - AB1DO: (203) 938-4880
- Email: ab1do@arrl.net
- Web site: [www.danbury.org/cara/Hamfest.html](http://www.danbury.org/cara/Hamfest.html)

### Directions

Take exit 10 off Rt. 84. Go West onto Rt. 6 (west bound make a right, east bound make a left). Approx.  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile at flag pole make a right onto Main Street/Rt. 6/Rt. 25. Edmond Town Hall will be approx. 100 yds on left.

Candlewood Amateur Radio Association (CARA) Hamfest, Sept. 11, 2011  
c/o Joe de Groot - AB1DO, 30 Sunnyview Drive, Redding, CT 06896. Phone # (203) 938-4880

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Daytime Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Evening Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

Please reserve \_\_\_\_\_ indoor tables @ \$15.00 each. Amount Enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_

I need \_\_\_ / do not need \_\_\_ electricity. **Please make checks payable to CARA**

## Join the September VHF QSO Party After the CARA Hamfest!

September is here, and that means the VHF bands have been getting a workout. "If you've never experienced the fun of VHF+ operating, the [ARRL September VHF QSO Party](#), the **weekend of September 10** is a great place to start," said ARRL Contest Branch Manager Sean Kutzko, KX9X. "With many HF radios now offering at least 6 meter SSB/CW capabilities - and some offering 2 meters and 70 cm as well -- any amateur with a Technician class license or higher can experience long-haul communication on the VHF bands."

Kutzko explained that September is known for having good tropospheric propagation, as opposed to June, which is known for sporadic-E, or E-skip. "As the summer winds down, the sporadic-E season comes to an end and good tropo conditions flourish," he said. "A modest station -- say a 50 to 100 W SSB/CW transceiver and a small Yagi on 2 meters -- can, with favorable conditions, make QSOs several hundred miles away. If conditions are excellent, QSOs of more than 1000 miles are possible." When operating on VHF, hams usually state their [Maidenhead grid squares](#) as part of the exchange.

While there will be some contest activity on FM simplex -- especially near large population centers -- Kutzko said that most long-distance VHF+ QSOs are conducted via CW or SSB; this means you need to use horizontally polarized antennas: "A dipole for 6 meters is only 9 feet, 4 inches long and is an easy construction project," he explained. "Try to get the dipole in the air as high as possible, but even 15 feet off the ground will make some QSOs. If you have an antenna tuner that can handle 6 meters, you can try loading up another of your antennas on 6 meters with reasonable success. For 2 meters and 70 cm, a horizontal loop will work nicely for SSB and CW contacts." But remember: SSB and CW QSOs use horizontally-polarized antennas, while FM uses vertical polarization. You can find plans for simple VHF antennas at the [Technical Information Service area of the ARRL Web site](#), in the Antennas chapter of [The ARRL Handbook](#), or in the VHF and UHF Antenna Systems chapter of [The ARRL Antenna Book](#).

Kutzko advises that hams need to be aware of a few things when operating on 6 meters: In the US and Canada, there is a *calling frequency* on 50.125 MHz USB. Many stations monitor this frequency to listen for band openings. Stations can call CQ on the calling frequency, but when somebody answers, the stations will need to find a new frequency on which to conduct their QSO. It is considered poor etiquette to monopolize the calling frequency for QSOs.

Activity will be centered on the calling frequencies of 50.125, 144.200, 222.100 and 432.100 MHz. But Kutzko said that most SSB activity will take place between 50.125-50.250 MHz, and CW between 50.100-50.080 MHz. If conditions are exceptional, Kutzko said that you may hear signals above 50.250. But he advised that the frequencies between 50.100-50.125 MHz are a *DX Window*, meaning it is reserved for QSOs between W/VE and DX stations, so please do not make stateside-to-stateside QSOs in that range.

Because VHF+ antennas are relatively small, Kutzko said that many amateurs like to operate from portable locations, such as a hilltop or a campground. "Find some high ground and put up an antenna; you'll be amazed at the difference operating from a high-terrain locale will make." Others operate the contest as a rover, operating from their car or truck while transmitting from multiple grid squares over the contest period. "Tracking rovers during the contest is almost as much fun as the contest itself," he said.

The [ARRL September VHF QSO Party](#) runs from 1800 UTC Saturday, September 10 through 0300 UTC Monday, September 12. Be sure to use those extra bands on your transceiver and get in on the fun you've been missing on 6 meters and up! *(Article Courtesy ARRL Letter)*

## Solar Activity Update



The Sun, as seen on Thursday, September 1, 2011 from [NASA's SOHO Extreme Ultraviolet Imaging Telescope](#). This [MDI](#) (Michelson Doppler Imager) image was taken in the continuum near the Ni I 6768 Angstrom line. The most prominent features are the sunspots. This is very much how the Sun looks in the visible range of the spectrum.

Tad Cook, K7RA, reports: Sunspot activity rose again this week, with the average daily sunspot number up nearly 18 points to 83.6, but the geomagnetic indices were down slightly. The high sunspot number for the week -- 121 -- was recorded on Wednesday, August 31. The last time the sunspot number was higher was on July 31 at 128 and August 1 at 130. The predicted solar flux is 110 on September 1-2, 105 on September 3, 100 on September 4-5, 95, 90, 90, 85, 90, 92 and 95 on September 6-12, 100 on September 13-15, and finally peaking at 105 on September 18-22. The predicted planetary A index is 5 on September 1-2, 8 on September 3-4, 5 on September 5-10, and then 8, 12, 8 and 5 on September 11-14. Look for more information on the ARRL website on Friday, September 2. For more information concerning radio propagation, visit the [ARRL Technical Information Service Propagation page](#).

*(Solar Report courtesy ARRL Letter)*

**News Articles on ham radio? Items offered for sale or wanted to buy? Contact the CAPERS editor, Barry KA1JDD at KA1JDD at ARRL.net.**