



Capers

December 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



Holiday Party: Friday, Dec. 9, 8 p.m. @ Stony Hill Fire Station

(NOTE: CARA VE SESSION SATURDAY, DEC 3 at the S.H. Fire Station!)

CARA Meeting Minutes,

CARA Meeting, November 11, 2011

The meeting was called to order at 8 PM by CARA President Roger Mitchell, NG1R, with 18 members and guests present.

The program for the evening was presented by Betsy Doane, K1EIC, ARRL Connecticut Section Manager. Her sister Barbara Lombardi, K1EIR, also came with her to the meeting.

The title of Betsy's talk was "How do we do all this stuff with the lights out". How does she, as a blind Amateur Radio operator, "do all that stuff"? It isn't easy but a wide variety of tools are available to make it possible. Just as levers and pulleys are used to lift heavy loads, devices are available to describe in English what is needed to operate radios and work with computers. There are also Braille readers for some applications to provide a touch output.

Several things that Betsy demonstrated were the Elecraft K-3 Voice, Math Type LaTeX, a page scanner and a bar code reader. The last is a self-contained hand-held device that reads the code on grocery items and says what it is along with nutritional information and preparation instructions, if required. That isn't *strictly* ham related except if you need fuel to keep going during a contest.

After the meeting I went net surfing to look at some of the resources available. HandiHams is one and there are also individuals developing specialized solutions to specific problems. On page 80 of this month's QST (November 2011) under "New Products" there is an Audible Transmitter Output Monitor. The monitor "...connects in series with the feed line, and senses RF voltage to produce an audible tone whose pitch is proportional to power". You can "hear" the auto tuner at work, "and by listening

to the pitch, (determine) that the transmitter, tuner and antenna are working correctly”.

We appreciate Betsy’s insight to an important aspect of amateur radio--the opportunity for people of all abilities to Get on the Air.

After a short break we went on to the business part of the meeting.

The Minutes for the October meeting were accepted.
The Treasurer’s report of a current balance of \$10,276.74 was accepted.

Steve Simons, W1SMS, reported on the status of the CARA repeaters. Bill, N1PJJ, has collected various parts for assembling a grounding system for the repeater site. We have been lucky so far, but our equipment should be protected. We also need a battery backup for the site and this is being worked on. Steve is continuing to test an alternate repeater at his QTH. We do not want any surprises after we drag it all the way up the hill!

There was a discussion of the procedures for Field Day and the Hamfest. In both cases we have a core group but times change and core groups disperse. Before that happens we need to make a file so we do not lose track of what works and what does not. Also, since we do not have a clubhouse in which to store equipment, we need a list of what’s where. For example, I have the cooking grill and folding table, and some things are at the Bethel EOC, but...

As usual, the December meeting will be our pot luck Holiday Party.

The balance of the meeting was an informal discussion of how each of us survived the October 29th snow storm, also known as Alfred. I was glad I had a battery powered AM/FM radio to keep up with news of the storm. We tuned around until we found a station that had useful local information.

One thing Alfred did was turn a scheduled Simulated Emergency Test into an Actual

Emergency Response, complete with a Red Cross shelter. (This may just push me into buying a generator... although what I would really like is a hydrogen fuel cell.)
If you had an interesting situation or found something useful maybe you could put it on the CARA reflector.

The meeting adjourned at 10:10 PM

-- Bill Thoren, N1TIW, Secretary

CARA VE Session Saturday!

Saturday, Dec 3, 2011

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.

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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.

On the Air: The ARRL 10 Meter Contest -- Get On

While the Bands Are Hot!

Ten meters -- in case you haven't heard, is alive in a big way! That



Steve Gette, KF7GNI, of Saint Helens, Oregon, made his first-ever attempt at contesting in the 2010 ARRL 10 Meter Contest from the shack of Mike Ritz, W7VO. [Mike Ritz, W7VO, Photo]

means that the ARRL 10 Meter Contest -- coming up the weekend of December 10-11 -- is going to be the one of the best we've seen in years! During this event, many propagation modes will be available: Sporadic-E will help you work stateside stations, a touch of meteor scatter in the morning will give you split-second chances to work stations -- you'd better be quick, though! -- and DX stations will be plentiful, thanks to the return of F2 propagation. ARRL Contest Branch Manager Sean Kutzko, KX9X, said that he keeps hearing from numerous hams who have been licensed only three or four years, telling him that they've never experienced a 10 meter opening because they weren't licensed during the last solar cycle peak: "A common phrase I'm hearing is, 'Now I understand what all the Old-Timers in my club were talking about -- 10 meters is great!' With a concentration of activity for the contest, there will be an opportunity for the first time in several years to experience the beauty of a wide-open 10 meter band. With so much excitement worldwide over the great conditions, the 2011 ARRL 10 Meter Contest could see the highest level of participation in a very long time!"

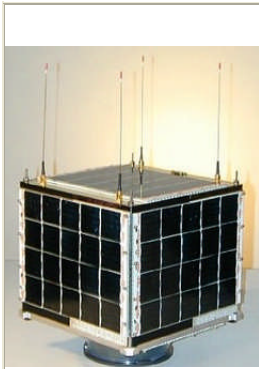
Logbook of The World: LoTW Processing Update



Logbook of The World ([LoTW](#)) is continuing to accept and process logs, including logs from this past

weekend's CQ World Wide CW Contest. Before the contest, LoTW had just about caught up with the backlog, but due to the high number of logs submitted after the contest, is once again seeing delays. As of December 1, the processing delay is at 22 hours -- down from 45 hours last week -- with approximately 830,000 QSOs in 2500 logs still waiting to be processed. If it has been more than 48 hours since you uploaded a log to LoTW and your log has not yet been processed, please upload it again. **Remember:** Do not send entire logs that contain previously uploaded QSOs -- use the date range option when signing logs, selecting only those QSOs in a specific date range to upload to LoTW. Thanks again for your patience.

The CARA "Pot Luck" Holiday Party is Friday, Dec. 9, 8 p.m. at the Stony Hill Fire Station. Please bring a hot dish, side dish or dessert that can be shared by everyone.



OSCAR 51 was launched in 2004 and became one of the most popular Amateur Radio satellites ever created. [Photo courtesy of AMSAT]

AMSAT-OSCAR 51 -- the popular FM repeater satellite -- has likely reached the end of its operational lifespan. AMSAT-NA Vice President of Operations Drew Glasbrenner, KO4MA, issued the following statement on November 29: "It is with a heavy heart I report that AO-51 has ceased transmission and is not responding to commands. The last telemetry data indicated that the

third of six batteries was approaching failure to short, and observations indicate the voltage from three cells is insufficient to power the UHF transmitters. The IHU [internal housekeeping unit] may continue to be operative. Initial tests with the S band transmitter were also not positive, although more attempts are in order. We have tried leaving the satellite in an expected state where if voltages climb high enough, the 435.150 transmitter may possibly be heard. The command team will regularly attempt communications with the satellite over the coming months (and years). There is always the possibility that a cell will open and we could once again talk to our friend while illuminated. Thanks to all who helped fund, design, build, launch, command, and operate AO-51. Its 7 year mission has been extraordinary."



The Sun, as seen on Thursday, December 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.

SOLAR UPDATE

Tad "[Like the Moon and the stars and the Sun](#)" Cook, K7RA, reports: November conveniently ended on the last day of the data reporting period for the upcoming bulletin, so we can now look at recent averages. Solar Cycle 24 continues to turn up. We have a new high for the trailing three

month daily sunspot number average. Starting with the three month period ending in December 2010 and going through November 2011, they were: 30.1, 35.3, 55.7, 72.3, 74.4, 65.9, 61.5, 63, 79.6, 98.6 and 118.8. There hasn't been a three month period with average daily sunspot numbers above 118.8 since way back in June, July and August 2003, when the average was 121.9. The latest forecast from NOAA/USAF has the solar flux on December 1-11 at 145, 140, 135, 135, 140, 135, 135, 145, 150, 150 and 155, and then at 160 on December 12-18. The planetary A index on December 1-10 at 8, 8, 7, 7, 5, 7, 5, 5, 8 and 8, and then 5 on December 11-22.

(Some articles courtesy of ARRL Letter)