



The SinePost

The Monthly Newsletter of the Eastern Connecticut Amateur Radio Association



A Message from the President

March 2019

Hello members and associates of ECARA,

I hope this month's message finds you shoveled out and warm.

We had a good meeting last month and got up to speed on the pending issues and obligations of the club.

It was decided that we will have all the materials in place when a tower crew climbs the QV tower. The duplexer at the top of the tower is bad and instead of replacing it, a second coax will feed the antenna. We will have an update at the March meeting.

Speaking of the March meeting, we will be having it at the Golden Greek in Dayville on 3/1/19. The Club meeting will start at 7PM as usual but the room is ours from 6PM on. I plan on eating before the start of the meeting that way the business portion won't be interrupted with servers.

Vin, KB1JDX will be presenting a discussion on Ecomm after the business portion. This was requested by many of the members and always a good refresher. This is one of the reasons the FCC allows us to operate and its good info.

In April we will be having another breakfast. 4/6/19 9am, location TBD. Keep an eye on the new Group.io reflector for updates. Thanks Brit.

The WX was a little tough for the March Breakfast. Six brave souls ventured out in the snowy weather and had a great time at Main Street Grill.

And at the end of April, we have our only fund raiser, the Hamfest. Start looking for donations for the club table. That always help us fund the things we do. Questions can be directed to Jon, KA1MPG at jonas217@verizon.net

Ray, W1YFF and Ed, K1ZE have offered to host a build night. Ray has some donated 40M kits and PC interfaces that can be built. I know they took inventory of the material and we should have more info and a date for the build night at this month's meeting.

2019 Officers

President

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Member at Large (2019-2020)

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I'd like to thanks Eli, K1QM for his ongoing support of the meetings by donating a raffle item. Much appreciated.

I'm trying to keep this short this month. After I saw my message printed in the Sinepost, the Unabomber treatise was shorter. Sorry about that.

Hope to see you Monday night. YL's, XYL's, significant others and other non-ECARA hams are welcome to sit in and learn. Spread the word.

73,
Paul, KE1LI

ECARA Nets

Windham County Weather Net – 8 PM Wednesdays on 147.225/R
ARES Net – Wednesdays following the WX net (approx. 8:15 PM)
Flying Saucer Net – Thursdays at 9 PM on 28.475 USB

NEXT MEETING



Golden Greek Restaurant

474 Putnam Pike, Dayville, CT 06241

Monday 7PM, Mar 11th

SECRETARY REPORT

February 11, 2019 Meeting

Location: Day Kimball Hospital

Members Present

| | | | | | |
|----|----------------|----|-------------|----|--------------|
| 1 | John K1CSP | 2 | Ray W1YFF | 3 | John K1JFT |
| 4 | Vinny KB1JDX | 5 | Phil KB1JQA | 6 | Ed K1ZE |
| 7 | Frankie KB1DNO | 8 | . Eli K1QM | 9 | Bill KA1KAC |
| 10 | Paul KE1LI | 11 | BOB KR1U | 12 | Harry KC1IOX |
| 13 | Bob W1EQ | 14 | Mike AC1FZ | 15 | |
| 16 | | 17 | | 18 | |

Meeting Called to order: February 11, 2019 at 1902 Hours

Meeting Conducted by: Paul Rollinson- President

Motion to accept Secretaries report: Accepted as written

Treasurers Report: Frances Rollinson

Account Balance: \$8030.03 Accepted as read

Old Business:

1. Cellular Company no longer able to install antenna for back-up repeater at QV Emergency Dispatch. Matter is tabled indefinitely until all parts for installation can be assembled and an Installer can be found.
2. Day Kimball Hospital Radio System:
 - a. Facilities Manager Bob Andrews at Day Kimball Hospital was contacted and will be available to survey the radio system with us.
 - b. Vinny and John Turner will make an appointment to survey the site, catalog equipment, and determine best location and placement of antenna cable and radio.

New Business:

1. Frankie KB1DNO stated the Jog With Judy Road race has been scheduled for May 4, 2019. Eli K1QM will be Net Control and make the arrangements to cover the race.
2. Ed K1ZE inquired about Identification cards for new members. Frankie KB1DNO stated she only had a few new paid members and suggested we wait until we had a larger number.
3. Paul Rollinson KE1LI announced a club breakfast will be held on March 2, 2019 at the Main Street Grill in Putnam.

4. Paul KE1LI discussed having dinner meetings at the Golden Greek and it was agreed that he would inquire into getting a private room for us to conduct meetings.
5. Paul KE1LI discussed contacting Woodstock Academy and possibly establishing an Amateur Radio club at the school with the assistance of ECARA members.

Motion to Adjourn: President Paul Rollinson made motion to adjourn at 1934 hours and it was accepted.

Ed K1ZE showed a video of the 2015 K1N Navassa Island Radio Expedition.

HOW I SURVIVED THE 2018 ARRL GRID CHASE AND “CANCER”

It's 23:59 p.m. December 31st, 2018 and finally the American Relay League Grid Chase has ended. The objective of the ARRL International Grid Chase is simple. The following is copied from the ARRL website: “Work stations in as many grid squares as possible and upload your log data to ARRL's Logbook of The World (LoTW). Every new grid square contact confirmed through LoTW counts toward your monthly total, so you have an incentive to start the chase as soon as you ring in the New Year. At the end of each month, your totals on the Grid Chase leader board will reset to zero. Fear not, though. The online scoring system will maintain your monthly totals for a grand total at the end of the year, when an annual summary will be released and awards given to top finishers in various categories. You can find more details on the ARRL website.

My final total was 1214 unique grids and 16,204 points in the 2018 ARRL Grid Chase, 15th place overall in the world and 1st in Connecticut. Let's go back in time to July, 2017. I'm bored with ham radio. The solar cycle is at minimum, activity is low on most bands. I'm reading books on my iPad. Then I read something about WSJT-X JT9 and JT65. I give it a try and I got a problem. I can receive but not transmit. Now, that was a common problem for newbies like me, at that time. Even today, on the WSJT-X reflector, new ops have the similar problems. With the help from hams on the WSJT-X and MicroHam reflectors, after 2 weeks of failed attempts, I'm able to transmit. My first QSO on JT65 is with WA8AHZ on 20 meters on 8/4/2017. I proceed to make 622 Q's on JT65 until 09/28/2017. JT65 is slow, real slow. It takes 55 seconds to transmit and another 55 to receive a short exchange. However, back in July, K1JT and his team invented FT8, which is part of the WSJT-X package. Transmit and receive is less than 15 seconds each. It's possible to make a QSO in one minute. My first contact on FT8 is with W8CO on 40 meters on 9/29/2017.

Ah yes, the issue with cancer. In August, I develop some health issues. From September through November, I went through a series of tests and finally an MRI reveals that I have tumors in my bladder and I have a hernia that needs to be fixed ASAP. The hernia was unexpected. The hernia gets fixed and in November, my urologist does a Cystoscopy and says “you have bladder cancer”. And I say “yah, well I got FT8”. Seriously, FT8 kept my mind off the cancer. The plan was to start cancer treatments in January 2019.

In the meantime, from October to December, I make 5,061 QSO's on FT8. I achieve WAS digital and 80 meter digital and DXCC in 90 days. I didn't have any symptoms with this cancer; it's something that was picked up in a urine sample. I think you get my drift.

I have reached some milestones on FT8. So, know what? Ah, the ARRL announces this new event called the Grid Chase in 2018. At that point, I'm not sure of the side effects of the cancer treatments, which start at the end of January. I find myself competing to keep up with W1VT for first place in Connecticut. Zach beats me 1831 to 1650 grid chase points for the month of January.

I start the cancer treatments, called BCG. Google it. I'm not going into details. If you have questions, email me or I can explain at the next meeting. Anyway, the treatments dragged out in to March, due to infections that occurred as a result of the treatments. Side effects were not that bad. I just had to keep close to the bathroom for a couple of days, which is across from my shack.

In February, I started to get serious about this Grid Chase event. I knew that just making FT8 or RTTY QSO's (they both count as digital) was not going to keep me up in the standings. Working the other modes, SSB and CW, was going to be factor and contesting was the answer. In 2018, I operated in 61 contests. That number does not include the 1 hour CWT's that I operated in on most Wednesday's.

The CWT operators are good LOTW participants. The CWT is sponsored by the CW Operators Club. I'm a member. For more information go to <https://cwops.org/>

Back to the cancer story. Towards the end of March, I still hadn't received my sixth cancer treatment, due to infections. The doctor decided to set me up for surgery and remove the tumors, which were removed, tested and 2 weeks later he gave me the good news "NO CANCER". The cancer had not traveled into the lining of the bladder. It was gone. He told me he would be checking me for the rest of my life, so the next checkup was scheduled for October.

From April to August, I maintained my spot on the leader board around the 10th position. I operate in any contest that would result in confirming grids on LOTW. During the latter part of August, I developed a heart rhythm problem that resulted in numerous tests and the final prognosis was "it ain't going to kill you"

During the months of September through November, contesting activity was at its peak. Most of my FT8 activity was in the evening while I was watching the Boston Red Sox as they played all the way to the World Series. On the weekends, I operated in a contest.

In October, I had another Cystoscopy and the doctor found some small tumors in the same area as before. Surgery was scheduled and on November 1, the tumors were removed, tested, "NO CANCER". Next scheduled retest is May 1, 2019. A big relief. I noticed during the latter part of 2018, that many stations were making a serious efforts to climb up in the standings. KB1ESF and NF3R made a big move and I kept a close watch on their scores.

In December, I knew if I wanted to stay in the top 15, I needed to go all-in. In December, I uploaded 4297 QSO's to LOTW, of which 2914 were FT8. That's almost 100 FT8 QSO's per day. By the 15th of the month, the new band/grids started to dry up. I

had kept a notebook of all my FT8 contacts in any month and had a system in place. I ran for the first two weeks of the month and then Search & Pounce the rest of the month, using the search feature on the Grid Chase website to help me pick up new band/grids. It made the event, for me anyway, more challenging. It reminded me of the paper dupe sheets we used back in the day.

During the 2018 event, I uploaded 33,752 QSO's to LOTW. Mode breakdown was as follows: FT8; 20,038. CW: 10,953. RTTY: 1,899 and SSB: 862, which was my weak mode due to bad hearing problems. I worked all S & P in SSB contests, and guys would tell me "you off frequency". Story of my life. No problem copying CW. I take out the hearing aids and turn up the volume.

I downloaded all the 2018 LOTW confirmed QSO's into DX4WIN. The FT8 results show 130 DXCC mixed. My best band was 17 meters with 95 DX. I got WAS mixed, and WAS on 80 and 40. My best and most memorable FT8 DX contact was with ZS1LS, in South Africa; 7,748 miles away, on 160 meters at 03:38 UTC (10:38 pm) on December 14. It was at his sunrise. He confirmed on LOTW. I was running 70 watts to an inverted L with 35 buried radials.

My final standing in the Grid Chase event was 15th in the world and 1st in Connecticut. I confirmed 1,214 unique grids and my final grid score was 16,204. It was nice fun event. Thank you ARRL!!! And most importantly, I'm a cancer survivor. 80 years old and looking forward to the next solar peak.

Epilogue: The FT8 mode has generated considerable discussion, both pro and con. I have been a ham for over 50 years and most of the QSL cards that I have received are from DX stations. Since I have been on FT8, I have received 40 stateside cards. I have also received emails from hams who have thanked me for giving them a Connecticut FT8 QSO. They added that they have been away from the hobby and are just getting

active again. Many of these hams are in restricted developments and are using antennas in the attic, hidden in the trees etc. FT8 is here and it's not going away. 73 Bob Garceau, W1EQ

ECARA Member Spotlight

Hi everyone. Are you interested in what our members do at home? I am. I'm curious about what antennas they use and what radio gear they have. Of course what keeps them interested in amateur radio. And with a twist! I'm not going to say who owns the station until the end. Can you guess who set up and owns the station we will see this month??



The picture shows a 20M thru 6M Step-IR 3 element beam on a 40 crank-up pole. The Step-IR beam antenna has motorized elements that tune to

a frequency by a smart controller in the shack. It is always optimized for the frequency in use by the motors changing the length of the copper element inside the fiberglass tubes. The motors are in the small boxes on the boom. It is always tuned for low SWR no matter what frequency you operate on.

Not shown is the tree right on the neighbor's property holding wires for 160M, 80M and 40M vertical antennas. It is very close to the property line and the owner has an agreement to leave wires in it. The radials for the 3 vertical antennas run all in the same direction onto the owner's property and snakes around the house. No perfect circle of radials on this small lot!! A lawn edger was used to cut a slot in the lawn and the radial wire was pushed down into the cut and stomped on to re-cover the wire. It may seem like a compromise antenna, but it has confirmed way over 100 DXCC countries on 160M. Same with the 80M and 40M vertical using the same wire radials. Small city lot and good performing antennas on all bands.



The station is all Elecraft gear put together from kit form. The transceiver is a K-3 100W 160M to 6M radio. Center is the spectrum display P-3. Far right is a KPA-500 500W amplifier and a KAT-500 auto antenna tuner is on top. All from kits! The K-3 transceiver is a world traveler. It has been to the Caribbean at least 5 times hand carried by its owner. To the far left is part of the controller for the Step-IR antenna. Writelog is used for contest and

everyday computer logging. Most contacts are completed using Morse Code (CW) and digital modes. The radio is on a digital FT-8 frequency in this picture. The box on top of the auto antenna tuner is a digital interface between the station and the computer.

Not shown are awards for DXCC (talking to 100 countries) on 9 bands, WAS (Worked All States) on 9 bands and confirming all Counties of every state in the US. Other awards for ARRL Sweepstakes contest, Winner of the New England QSO Party, ARRL 160M contest and many others. All contacts are up-loaded to the on-line logbook called ARRL Logbook of the World. LoTW.

Bob, W1EQ, owns this station. First licensed as K1YRP. He shortened his radio callsign in 1996. He has been active in Field Day longer than I have known him. He has been elected Secretary and Trustee of ECARA in the past. Bob also has operated as DX from U.S. Virgin Islands as KP2/W1EQ many times while totaling thousands of contacts. The picture is Bob conducting an on-line business class while enjoying the shade of a palm tree at the station of NP2N on St. Croix USVI. Thanks for opening your shack for our tour of the station. 73



AMATEUR RADIO FLEA MARKET



Sunday
April 28, 2019
8 AM to 12 PM
RAIN OR SHINE



ADMISSION: **\$3.00** DONATION
TO BENEFIT: **Eastern Conn. Amateur Radio Assoc.**
(Previously the Pomfret Hamfest)

VE test session, Limited spaces available, Must Pre-register

Raceway Restaurant at Thompson Speedway

205 East Thompson Rd. Thompson, CT 06277

Tables are **\$15.00** each. Please reserve in advance

For more information and table reservations
: Contact Jon KA1MPG at Jonas217@Verizon.net or 508-943-4467

WWW.ECARA.NET

Talk in on 147.225 MHz PL 156.7

ECARA Calendar of special events 2019:

Club meetings held every second Monday of each month at DKH unless otherwise indicated.

| Event | Date | Purpose | Contact/Net Control | Attendance |
|---|-------------|---|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| O'Putnam Road Race | 3/10 | Safety & Communications | KB1JDX | |
| Hamfest | 4/28 | Annual flea market and VE Session | KA1MPG | |
| Jog with Judy | 5/4 | Safety & Communications | K1QM | |
| Radio in the Park | 5/5 | Social and "Get on the Air" event at Wolf Den | KB1JDX | |
| Skywarn Class - Eastford | 5/13 | Storm spotting & reporting | KC1CVU | Anyone interested |
| Woodstock Road Race | 5/27 | Safety & Communications | KE1LI | |
| ECARA Field Day | 6/22-23 | Contesting & emergency readiness | KA1MPG | |
| Kid's Day | June | Demonstration and promote Amateur Radio services to youth | K1CSP | |
| Annual ECARA picnic | August | Socialization, and business related activities (if any), BYOB & soft drinks | TBD | Members, family & friends |
| DKH 5K Road Race | August | Safety & Communications | KB1JDX | |
| VJ Day Parade | August | Safety & Communications | KB1JDX | |
| Brooklyn Fair | 8/22-25 | Promote Ham Radio to public | KB1JDX | |
| Harvester 5K Road Race | September | Safety & Communications | TBD | |
| Thompson Community Day | October | Promote Ham Radio to public | KB1JDX | |
| Woodstock Road Race | October | Safety & Communications | TBD | |
| BSA JOTA | TBD | Demonstration and promote Amateur Radio services to youth | K1CSP | |
| Dazzle Light Parade | November | Safety & Communications | TBD | |
| ECARA election of officers & Xmas party | 12/9 | Social & administrative event; officer election | TBD | Members, family & friends |

Membership Application Form:

| Eastern Connecticut Amateur Radio Association Membership Application / Renewal | | | | |
|---|---|--|--------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> New Membership; <input type="checkbox"/> Renewal Membership | | Today's Date: | | |
| If you are already a "Ham", please complete below then the yellow area: | If you are an aspiring "Ham", please complete below then the yellow area: | ADDITIONAL INFO (not required, but helpful) | PLEASE SELECT ONE: | |
| CALL SIGN: | FIRST & LAST NAME: | YOUR DOB: | <input type="checkbox"/> | INDIVIDUAL (\$20/yr) |
| LICENSE CLASS: | STREET ADDR: | SPOUSE NAME: | <input type="checkbox"/> | FAMILY (\$30/yr) |
| HANDLE (nickname): | CITY, STATE, ZIP: | SPOUSE DOB: | <input type="checkbox"/> | SENIOR (\$15/yr) |
| FIRST YEAR LICENSED: ARRL MEMBER: <input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no | | DOM: | <input type="checkbox"/> | STUDENT |
| CURRENT PHONES (home& cell) HOME: CELL: | | | <input type="checkbox"/> | 1 st Year ECARA course |
| CURRENT EMAIL: | | Would you like to receive the SinePost? <input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no | <input type="checkbox"/> | PROVISIONAL |
| ECARA Treasurer, PO Box 63 Dayville, CT 06241, Phone # 860 928 5147, Fax # 860 928 3844 | | | | |