



KEY KLIX



The Monthly Newsletter of the Meriden ARC

January 2010

2009 - The Year in Review

2009 saw Paul, K1SEZ become the first MARC member to qualify for the ARRL's "Triple Play Worked All States" award having worked all states with CW, SSB and digital modes.

All the club nets were active in 2009. The FM net on the W1KKF Repeater, the 6 Meter SSB net and the 10 Meter SSB net all saw steady weekly activity.

Al, N1API was busy promoting the club's Castle Craig Chapter 10/10 at the 10/10 annual convention in Florida. He set up a station at the event and handed out many new certificates and upgrades.

In addition to all the usual ham contests, the MARC also ran it's own in house "MARC Marathon Challenge". And late in the year, we were happy to be notified that we had a "clean sweep" in the 75th anniversary of the ARRL Sweepstakes SSB contest held in 2008.

There were many donations from both outside the club and from club members to the Club Scholarship fund honoring it's founder, Frank Darmalfalski W1FD (SK) on his passing.

In 2009 the downward trend of the economy continued and had a negative effect on both our scholarship funding and club treasury. Our financial status and the money market fund were hot topics for most of the year. Although we took a "hit" like many others, our financial standing at the end of the year was still solid.

We were at the Scout Jamboree in Orange CT., promoting Ham Radio. We also provided communications for the 2009 Cheshire MS Walk-a-thon and the Wallingford Community Day Fishbein road race.

Our 2009 Field Day event was not without problems. Mostly generator problems. We ended up using club members generators which enabled us to push on to a very successful showing.

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Club members also volunteered to help out at Connecticut's newest Hamfest, "The Yankee Peddler". And of course we also hosted the annual Nutmeg Hamfest in October. This year's event was yet again a success.

The MARC Email Reflector sort of disappeared. In the end it was discontinued.

2009 was the year that the Wallingford Repeater Association merged with MARC. The W1KKF/R is now part of the Meriden Amateur Radio Club. During several meetings prior to the vote of approval by club members, there were some heated debates. The club legal documents (by-laws etc.) had to be amended to allow this to happen.

2009 also saw some discussion on whether or not our dues should be raised. The club was split down the middle and it took a second vote that ultimately ended up with our dues structure staying the same.

This was the year that our meeting place was moved from upstairs at the Office of Emergency Management building to the first floor. We also had to move the OEM radio station (and MARC shack) to the first floor as well. This was done in order to allow the building to meet several handicapped access requirements. It is hoped we have a fully functional station in early 2010.

And sadly, even though we had a temporary station setup, 2009 was the first year there was no club participation in either the CW or Phone Sweepstakes due to lack of interest.

Ending on a positive note, our "Get your ticket in one day" courses were a huge success. One was held at the Wallingford Central Fire Department situations room the other at the Wallingford OEM building. These were one-day, tutorial, study and testing sessions that saw several persons join the Amateur Radio world.

The Prez Sez

Hi Friends:

Welcome to 2010! Is it really 10 years ago that we were all wondering if the Y2K thing would mean an end to civilization as we know it? I hope all of you had an enjoyable Holiday Season, filled with the warmth and good cheer of friends and family. Now it's time to hunker down and survive the winter... or if you're made of sterner stuff than this old fart, enjoy the brisk and bracing days ahead. Most days, I'm at the Post Office at just about 5PM, and I enjoy the fact that each day it's imperceptibly, but inexorably, lighter than the day before.

The New Year always brings thoughts of changes and improvements. How can we make MARC a better and more attractive club? I'm anxious to hear your ideas. Do you have an idea for an activity? Great! It doesn't have to be limited to the meeting place on the 4th Thursday of the month. Anytime, anywhere that we can get together adds to the fun.

I'd like us to make a real effort this year to attract new members. How can we do that? What can we do to make ourselves more widely known? What ideas do you have? None of us has all of the answers, and none of us can do it all. But you can do a little. Think about what you can do to attract one more member to your club. Please let me know what ideas you have. My daytime telephone is 203-440-4973, evenings 203-440-4468, email jbee (at) qsradio.com, or N1GNV (at) arrl.net. You can even mail me an anonymous letter at 30 Tremont St, Meriden, CT. 06450. One way or the other, get in touch and let me know what you think.

Finally, our good friend Alex Lentini, N1EBU (Lentini Communications in Berlin) has extended an invitation to MARC for a tech day at his store on Saturday, Jan 23rd. You'll find more details elsewhere in this issue.

I hope you can make it... I plan to be there. They are a great local dealer and deserve our support.

73 to all, and best for 2010
John Bee, N1GNV
President, MARC, INC

Thanks !

To my fellow MARC members I want to say that I was surprised and honored to have been awarded the 2009 Adolph Goodsell W1ICQ Elmer of the Year Award.

I was fortunate to have known Adolph and actually benefited from his wisdom and advise on more than one occasion. He used to take groups of us to the FCC headquarters in either New York or Boston to take our exams. He was always saying that if you made the trip for an upgrade or new license with W1ICQ, you were guaranteed success.

I've told this story before, but in honor of Adolph and for the delight of some of our newer members, I'll give the "quick" rendition here.

When I started in Ham Radio, my elmer was Al Borden, K1AF who back then was W1OWD. Sadly he is now a Silent Key. Al was an old fashioned CW ham who could carry on a conversation with you directly while he worked a station on CW at 25 plus WPM. Amazing guy. Well he was the guy who tutored me and taught me CW. Although the Novice CW requirements were 5 WPM he would not give me the written test until I could copy him at 15 wpm. I almost went looking for someone else to give me the exam, but stuck with it.

Got my ticket and was a happy camper. In those days the Novice license was good for two years after which you HAD to either upgrade or wait another year to re-test. I was pretty pleased with myself that I could get on the air

and work stations at 15 plus WPM. But two years went by fast and it was time for me to upgrade. I drove up to Boston and the first thing I had to pass was the code test at 13 wpm. Well I thought this was going to be easy. At that time I was easily doing 18. Should be a done deal. Well I froze. First the code was actually so slow I kept losing track of it. I was used to hearing "words" in batches and jotting down notes. But I couldn't write the letters down fast enough and of course the FCC wanted a few minutes of solid copy with no errors.

I flunked. I was crushed. Adolph heard about my dilemma and called me on the phone. He said that next month he was taking a couple guys from his latest class to New York to take some exams, and that I was welcome to come along. I told him my problem .. how I froze and couldn't copy 13 wpm.

That's when Adolph told me that he was my lucky charm. He told me that NOBODY fails an FCC test on his watch. So I agreed to go.

We got to the FCC in the morning and the first code test they did was the 21 WPM for those taking the Extra exam. I laughed and told Adolph I could probably pass that exam at home but would surely flunk the 13 wpm one here. So Adolph went up to the FCC guy who was running the show and had a talk with him. He then tells me to go into the testing room with the guys who are gearing up for the Extra code test. He says to me, "This isn't gonna count BUT if you listen to five minutes at that speed, BEFORE you take the general code test, it'll calm you down and you'll stop being such a nervous nelly". So I sat down with pencil and paper and commenced to copy the code. When the session was finished and the guy collected my paper, I joking said, "I'm really only here for the general so you can just tear up that one as I'll be back for the next test. He then said to me, "Oh yeah, you are the guy who can copy 21 in his head but can't write down 13.

I laughed and was absolutely sure when it

counted, I'd flunk again. And the sad thing was that I knew I had almost perfect copy at the higher speed. So the guy looks over my paper then looks at Adolph, and says to me, "Hell you've got at least 4 minutes of solid copy. Obviously you can copy code. Forget about the 13 wpm test. As soon as we finish with the rest of the CW testing you can join the written test group for the general."

Huh? Wow .. I passed! I didn't care if it was 21, 13, 5 or 2 wpm. I passed. Hooray. I talked with Adolph while the 13 wpm test was beginning and he told me that he and the FCC guy thought I would do better if I wasn't worried about the test actually counting. Yeah I guess I was a nervous nellie.

Well I took the general and passed it. We had to hang around as another guy in our group was waiting to take the Advanced test. I had my General and was ready to head for home.

Then Adolph starts with .. "go take the advanced test". I said I was happy that I got the general. He said, "Don't be silly, even if you don't pass the test, you'll at least get a look at what the test questions are like".

"Aw okay Adolph, I owe you this this one I guess". And so believe it or not .. I passed the Advanced. Then Adolph got really excited. "Take the Extra .. you're on a roll". "No no, I'm all tested out" I lamented. Actually the other guy we were waiting for, passed his Advanced test too and there wasn't any reason for us to hang around any longer.

So I didn't take the Extra exam. On the way home Adolph asked me if I was happy. You bet I was. But he then admonished me for not grabbing the moment and at least taking a look at the extra exam. I told him next time he was taking a few guys to the big city for testing, I would go and give it a shot.

Of course years passed. Adolph died. And I'm still an Advanced class ham. W1ICQ was

more than just good luck. He was kind, wise and a true Ham Radio Elmer.

All I can say is that it humbles me greatly to have my call sign included on Adolph's award. Thank you fellow MARC members. And thank YOU Adolph.

- 73, Rich WA1TRY

Free Tech Day at Lentini

Meriden Radio Club members are invited to a TRIPLEHEADER FREE TECH DAY FROM 9 AM to 1 PM On SATURDAY JAN. 23 at Lentini Communications at their new home, 221 Christian Lane, Unit A in Berlin

<http://www.lentinicomm.com/> Tel. 800-666-0908, Email: LentiniComm@connweb.com

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1. FREE CHECKUP OF YOUR TRANSCEIVER
(See details below).

2. FREE PROGRAMMING OF YOUR RIG
REGARDLESS WHERE BOUGHT

3. FREE SWR TEST OF YOUR MOBILEANTENNA
(Weather permitting)

Alex is dedicating this TECH DAY to the Meriden Radio Club members and their friends (and any other CT hams who happen to come). He will have coffee, decaf, tea and cookies and donuts for all.

Alex Lentini N1EBU says "Bring your equipment and Lentini's will check it out for you

We'll check your radio's RF power output, deviation, receiver sensitivity, DTMF deviation, etc.

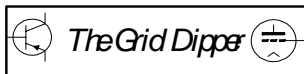
We will also help with programming frequencies, CTCSS tones, memories, etc.

This special event is open to all Regardless where you bought it, so come on down!"

This is a valuable chance to have the experts give you a hand with your radio, mobile antennas, etc. and meanwhile enjoy the camaraderie of Meriden hams and perhaps other hams from around the area.

. Don't forget Saturday January 23 at Lenti's from 9 am 1 pm.

Directions from Meriden area From I-91 North take exit 17. Follow signs for Rt. 5/15 North. Once on 5/15, (Berlin Turnpike), travel North until you come to CVS on your left. Take left (onto Deming Rd.) Follow all the way to the end. Take left onto Christian Lane. Turn right onto the #221 Christian Lane driveway at the big utility tower and up the hill around to the FRONT of the building. (Back of building faces the street) We are in Unit A.



Many remember those grammar school days of diving under your desk with your hands covering your head during an air raid drill the Duck and Cover stance. About the same time, commercial radios started to appear with a couple of small icons of a triangle inside a circle on the AM broadcast dial. Those were the ice-age days of the Cold War in the 1950s. The icons indicated the CONALRAD (CONTinental ALert RADio) frequencies of 640 KC and 1240 KC. Yes, those were also the days when frequency was measured in cycles per second -- the pre-Hertz days.

President Harry Truman authorized the establishment of a national communication warning system in 1951. CONALRAD was born. Before 1951, many broadcasters on their own or after a polite government request would interrupt scheduled programming for a news flash, the attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941 and a pending

tornado warning near Oklahoma City in 1948 are just two examples; but with this Executive Order the government would take over the airwaves and dictate the protocol during an emergency or air raid alert. In addition to providing early warning, CONALRAD was also designed to reduce the ability of the enemy, read Soviet, bombers from using commercial broadcasts as navigation beacons to the major U.S. cities.

The technical plan was really quite simple, at least on paper. When the system was activated, all commercial broadcast stations would shut down and a few designated transmitters would change to one of the CONALRAD frequencies. These primary transmitters were normally the very high powered stations, such as WLS Chicago, WGY Schenectady, WOR New York, WSM Nashville, KGO San Francisco, and other 50 KW stations around the U.S. Additionally, a series of lower power secondary transmitters were used to fill in those areas of the country not covered by the big guns. Before ending operations or changing frequency, commercial stations were to go through three iterations of five second on-off cycles followed by a 15 second two-tone alert signal. CONALRAD was never used for an actual emergency during its lifespan, but was plagued with many false alarms and testing problems.

Amateur radio was impacted by Truman's Executive Order, or at least the FCC operation plans that resulted. The 10-minute identification rule that continues today was put in place in 1957 as part of the CONALRAD system. The second mandate to amateurs no longer in effect required all hams to monitor a commercial broadcast station while on the air and immediately cease transmitting if the alert signal was heard. Some manufacturers started to market a receiver option that would automatically shut the transmitter down if the alert was detected. Subsequent changes to the national notification plan and technological improvements have eliminated the need for this monitoring requisite.

The original emergency notification system became outmoded by the mid 1960s for several

reasons. The enemy threat was more from ballistic missiles than bombers homing in on commercial transmissions. Television and FM stations were the predominant electronic media. Even the name, CONALRAD, evolved in some documentation to CONELRAD, Control of Electromagnetic Radiation, to reflect the newer scientific understanding of nuclear armament impacts. The Electronic Broadcast System (EBS) was initiated in 1967 to replace the obsolete CONALRAD system. Gone were the two fixed emergency frequencies. Gone were the cycle transmitter procedures for alerting, that some labeled Emergency Transmitter Stress Testing.

The EBS format included the AP and UPI wire services, all on-air media, and telephone carriers. The inclusion of television broadcasters and the elimination of the two fixed emergency frequencies were probably the biggest public in the upgrade to EBS. New procedures and policies were instituted to avoid the mistakes, abuse and false alarms of CONALRAD. The Attention Signal most commonly associated with the EBS was a combination of the sine waves of 853 and 960 Hz, a completely disharmonic combination that is extremely offensive to the human ear, and hence, perfectly suited to getting the audience's collective attention. In later years, it was expanded for use during peacetime emergencies at the state and local levels. Although the system was never used for a national emergency, it was activated more than 20,000 times between 1976 and 1996 to broadcast civil emergency messages and warnings of severe weather hazards. Yet despite the safeguards, false alarms did occur, including some serious enough to warrant federal investigations and more changes in the procedures.

In 1997, a new Emergency Alert System (EAS) superceded the EBS notification system. Controlled by the FCC, FEMA and the National Weather Service, the new EAS has a requirement for an EAS department at the state level to coordinate statewide and regional operations. As the twentieth century closed, EAS now included all broadcast radio (AM and FM). VHF.

UHF and cable television, and eventually added satellite radio and television providers. The goal is to include all developing public information providers could this possible include your internet ISP and cell phone provider in the future? One problem still exists, to some observers, in that the EAS announcements are audio only without regard to the ability of television to carry video information.

Although the EAS has a priority order of Presidential Announcements concerning emergency situations first; it is followed by state emergency information, local or regional emergency information and national news other than the Presidential announcement. The system has been used extensively in the relaying of weather related emergency warnings. Since President Truman first penned the CONALRAD executive order, the US Emergency Notification Systems have never been used to broadcast a national emergency warning or presidential emergency announcement. Even during the crisis of September 11, 2001 the cable and broadcast news organizations were on the scene so fast as to make an EAS broadcast anticlimactic.

[Grid_Dipper@Prodigy.net]. GD

Station Activities

What with the parties, holidays and all, I've taken a short vacation from working at the OEM and the club station. Time to get rolling again. I have to work off all the excess pounds I've gained anyway. <grin> I'm looking for a couple helpers to move that big old (and heavy) grey desk out of my office. It'll be replaced with a smaller one to make more room available for the radio station being installed there. I'm scheduling a work party for this coming Saturday Jan. 16. At that time I'll be ready to remove that desk and start assembling the radio consoles. There may even be coffee and donuts ...

73, WA1TRY - SAM

Secretary Report & Minutes of Meriden Amateur Radio Club December 2009

It was a very crisp and clear night when about 35-40 members of MARC and their guests assembled on December 11, 2009 to enjoy the Annual MARC Christmas Party. It was an excellent opportunity to renew old friendships and exchange holiday wishes. Again this year the Ladies Guild of the First United Methodist Church catered the event. All agreed the repast was professionally done and delicious. Overflowing plates from the main course did not deter members from a voracious attack on a scrumptious dessert table. Recognition for their efforts and a round of applause was rendered. Following the banquet, the business meeting began. The normal agenda was dispensed with.

The first order of business was a Motion by N1GNV second by many to accept new members Gaianne KB1TJD of New Haven and Lenny KB1TJC of Meriden. Passed unanimously. Contributions of several books and manuals from W1SKP and assorted supplies for the well equipped shack from QuickSilver Radio to be used as prizes for the 50/50 raffle. Motion by N1GNV to direct all the 50/50 monetary funds tonight to the scholarship fund. Passed. 50/50 winners: Susan N1HCA, Mike KB1SIO, Paul K1SEZ, John K1VDF, Pat N1BF, Rich WA1TRY, Dan W1DMM, and Steve WV2LKM.

The successful functioning of MARC is not a single person endeavor, President John N1GNV paid tribute to many of our members for their efforts in a variety of deeds over the past year and several years. This year we were not without our share.

• Bill W1KKF• Jim N1ZN• Haggie KB1HCC• Dan W1DMM• Bob KB1CIW• Chris WA1VXH• Skip W1SKP• Paul K1SEZ• Bob KB1FYL• Marty KB1KGP• Bob KE1AU• Don KE1AY• John K1VDF• Mike K1MVM• Todd K1TDO• Rich WA1TRY• Ernie Fratini and the Town of Wallingford for support of Emergency Amateur Services

Competition is usually intense for the renowned H.A. (horse's derriere) Award. Because the blunders were not observed or not uniquely irrefutable, the H.A. Award was not awarded and will remain in the stable. Several contenders were noted:

- Rich WA1TRY continues to maintain his repeater time-out record,
- Bob KB1CIW has the uncanny ability of never having a pencil, a piece of paper or a charged battery assembled in the same location at the same time,
- Haggie KB1HCC for having the fastest PTT trigger finger on the repeater input, and
- An unnamed, "Member B", acting as temporary Net Control called for check-ins in the wrong time zone forgetting the semi annual changing of the clocks.

Jim N1ZN made the nights highlight awards to the Ham of the Year and Elmer of the Year. These awards are voted on by the membership and represent the top praise of MARC members.

- Elmer of the Year Rich Aubin WA1TRY
- Ham of the Year John Bartscherer N1GNV

Before we closed, John N1GNV announced the challenge of a scholarship match by QuickSilver Radio was met and \$156 (\$78 in attendee donations and a \$78 match) contributed to the Scholarship fund. The 50/50 contributed an additional \$35. A hardy MARC thanks extended to all. The evening concluded with heartfelt good wishes to all and a hope for a happy 2010.

Submitted Dan Murphy, W1DMM, Secretary

Rogus Electronics

**New & Used
Ham Radio Gear
Service / Repairs**

**250 Meriden Waterbury Road
Southington, CT 06489
Phone: 860-621-2252**

Business Meeting January 14th

**First meeting 2010
Be there !**

**Activity Meeting January 28
TBA**

**Check club forums for
new information**

**Meriden Amateur Radio Club
Post Office Box 583
Meriden, CT 06450**

First Class