



KEY KLIX



The Monthly Newsletter of the Meriden ARC February 2011

Ride the Challenge Dragon

We are now in the year of the Dragon according to the Chinese Lunar calendar. The Dragon is professed to be a representation of prosperity and heavenly blessings. Will this prosperity extend to radio communications? Virtually all the soothsayers agree that Cycle 24 is on the upswing; is this a heavenly blessing? What better omens do you need to join the MARC Marathon Challenge?

The 2012 MARC Marathon Challenge began last October 1st, but there is plenty of time for you to amass a respectable entry before the end on September 30th. That's right, a full year to log your DX QSOs. See the MARC web page (MeridenARC.org) for complete information and rules. They are real simple, just get on the air and collect as many of the 341 DXCC entities as you can. Any band, any mode, any way you want; just do it.

Paul K1SEZ was awarded the 2011 First Place – Mixed Mode – High Power certificate at the December Holiday Party. As can be seen from the historic list below, achieving DXCC on an annual basis is not a momentous task.

Year	Name/Call	Pwr	Mixed	CW	SSB	Dig
2011	Paul K1SEZ	Hi	139			
2010	Paul K1SEZ	Hi	135			
2010	Mike K1MVM	Lo	160	117	118	--
2010	Mark K1PU	Lo	143	134	42	60
2009	No Entries					
2008	Paul K1SEZ	Hi	179			
2007	No Entries					
2006	Paul K1SEZ	Hi	117			
2005	Paul K1SEZ	Hi	65			
2005	Skip KA1EAU	Hi	48			
2005	Bob KE1AU	Lo	46			
2005	Tony KB1MKU	Hi	12			

Note: 1. Bold category certificate award.

2. Some entrants submitted separate mode listings.

(Continued next page)

The latter part of the winter is known for its doldrums, but it may be your chance to jump into the MARC Marathon Challenge. The ARRL International DX contest will be off and running (CW-Febru

In This Issue

MARC Marathon

Grid Dipper

Work Party !

February Activity Meeting

From the Editor

January Meeting Minutes

Station Activities

Club Information page

ary 18 & 19, SSB-March 3 & 4) with most of the 341 DXCC entities crowding the bands. Many other contests, DXpeditions and general ragchewing will provide the opportunity for a respectable score. Whether you are a contester or a non-contester, the ARRL-DX contest is the best starting chance to rack up your log entries for the MARC Challenge. By the end of March, you will be well on your way towards a DXCC Award and a winning Marathon Challenge submission. Shake off that winter cabin fever and ride the Dragon in the MARC Challenge.

GL es 73, W1DMM.

An intro to DXers All hams are DXers. It may



be only confirming those states you visited on

vacation, or grabbing that grid square near your college reunion site, or contacting some of those countries that you wish to visit sometime. Many hams even amass the critical 100 cards and submit the paperwork to the ARRL for their very own DXCC certificate. But there is a cadre of DXers ? some may call them obsessive or fanatical ? that chase each and every one of the 341 entities with a vengeance, especially if that entity is a new one or a seldom active location. Work them on all bands, all modes, and try to be first in the DXpedition log is this flock fs credo. Paul Dunphy VE1DX, an avid DXer, provides some insight into the grey matter of this unique group of hams.

DXers are Weird DXers are weird. Absolutely! Don't let anyone tell you anything else. We spend more time optimizing our stations than anything else! We have miles of ground wire and ground mats (made from chicken wire)

buried all around the yard. Not as 1/4 wave radials for verticals, but because we read somewhere that it will reduce sky noise and ground loss. We have every antenna optimized to get the lowest possible SWR -- and we fret and worry if the resonance point moves 50 KHz when it rains or snows! We won't use anything but RG-213 or better, even though RG-8U is just as good (but we are not 100% convinced!) And RG-11! Blasphemy; unless we can get it to match our antenna better 'cuz it's interacting with something that increases the impedance to a point where 75 ohm gives a better SWR than 52 ohm coax! If we can get our hands on hardline or heliax, we use it. One of us got a good buy on some one inch heliax. We used it to feed the 160 metre vertical. Really cuts down the line loss on 1.8 MHz. We read somewhere that hardline doesn't help much below 50 MHz, but we feel better, anyhow!

We all have \$5000-\$10,000 radios. They aren't good enough when they come from the factory. First off, we have to buy all the additional filters at \$250-\$400 a pop. We aren't satisfied with that, we then buy an outboard DSP unit -- usually good for another \$500. We look for mods that will increase the output power or make the audio more aggressive. Then we discuss endlessly on 2-metres whether the new rigs with built in DSP units at the IF level are worth buying. As soon as one of us caves in and buys one, all the others will have their own in a week! Invest in companies that make HF transceivers with a built in DSP unit. We will be buying them for sure.

Our transmit audio? Speech processor in all the time! Hard over to the right, of course! Most knobs are meant to be turned all the way to the right. Look at your rig if you don't believe this! Microphones -- we grudgingly admit one good thing CB OPs brought to HAM radio was the Astatic D-104! Yes sir! And an amplified D-104 too. It picks up all the background noise from the fans, etc. We find we are usually good for 30-40% of maximum output power in background noise alone. If not, we can adjust the

mike gain on the base of the D-104 until it is. Make no compromises. Only a D-104 will do the job.

CW proficiency? You bet! We all can recognize our call at 40 WPM when it's 339 in heavy QRN -- and send "R R TU DE VE1DX 5NN 73 SK" at 50 WPM. However, if someone wants to rag chew at 15 WPM, we suddenly develop deep QSB and heavy QRM. Their might be something up the band that we need for a new one. We aren't going to sit here and waste time!

Amplifiers -- no DXer would be without one! And no little 500 watt weakling, either. We run full legal power. Always! Even if the DX is 30 over! We dream of amps that will put out 5000 or 10000 watts, sketch out designs on scratch pads of prototypes with four or six 8877s. We wonder if the traps on that Yagi are really only good for 2000 watts. Does the local licensing authority really monitor output power? None of us want to find out, but we dream nonetheless! Maybe we could re-wind the traps with bigger wire?

For that matter, why are we using traps at all? We need monobanders! Invest in companies that sell monoband Yagis. If we haven't bought them yet, we will. You can bet on that. The only investment safer than antenna companies is those that build tall towers. High ones designed to carry a lot of weight and wind load. And we all will be buying more than one of these too. Why? Because if it didn't fall over in that big wind storm last winter, we didn't have enough antennas on it. We'll fix that this summer. Don't bother talking this over with your broker, just invest in towers! 73/DX Paul VE1DX **GD**

Work Party

Saturday February 11th we will be looking for volunteers to help with the clean up and preparation for our upcoming move to the new meeting place. We will start at around **1:00 PM** Please note the time. Many of our members will be attending the ARES course in Guilford in

the morning, however we should be back by 1 PM. We will be going through everything in the building, sorting things to throw out, or save. Note! Volunteers will have first pick on any item that we will be getting rid of. We plan to work from 1 to 5 PM that Saturday. Additional time (if needed) will be announced via the club forum. Listen to the W1KKF repeater for additional info and future times and dates.

There is a lot of work to be done. After we sort out all the "stuff" we will then be moving everything to the new meeting place at the Cook Hill Fire house on Cook Hill Rd, Wallingford.

Our next business meeting is scheduled for March 8th and will probably be held at the new meeting location. Watch for the March Key Klix for specific details.

February Activity Meeting

This month's activity meeting will be a refresher course on traffic handling. Sample message forms will be available and a quick overview of a message format and how to send and receive them.

See you there 7:30 PM, February 23.

From the Editor

This month's issue of Key Klix is going out a tad late. Sorry about that. You should be getting it around the date of the business meeting. Believe it or not, I started this issue about two weeks ago. Then had a ton of personal things that required my urgent attention. Health issues have really taken a toll on me lately. I'm typing as fast as I can <grin>

I have a new desktop publishing application that I have started to use for each of the last few months. But it has a steep learning curve and every time I start a new issue with it, there always seems to be some odd-ball issue that I couldn't resolve. (Continued page 6)

Secretary Report & Minutes of Meriden Amateur Radio Club January 2012

The business meeting opened at 1930 on January 12, 2012 with approximately 17 people in attendance. A quorum was present.

Announcements -

Rich WA1TRY is doing well after being admitted to Mid-State Medical Center. He hopes to return home shortly.

Activity meeting - Thurs, January 26th at 7:30 PM – Echo Link by Brian K1SOX.

Nick Zudrick N1NZ and Bob Schulte, both friends of MARC, became Silent Keys recently.

Secretary's Report -

Previous minutes accepted as presented.

Treasurer's Report -

Treasurer's report accepted as presented.

Contributions –

None

Correspondence –

None.

Scholarship – (KE1AY)

Letters to schools out end of January.

Applications due end of April.

Club Station & Facilities - (WA1TRY-SAM)

It was noted that during the October SET, the Alinco 2 meter rig did not satisfy the needs as an ARES rig, lacking dual channel and odd offset capabilities. N1GNV offered some choices as a replacement. (IC-2820, FT-8800, and TM-V71A). It was noted that the existing Alinco could be used as a backup or a dedicated packet radio.

Motion by N1GNV second by K1VDF to purchase a Kenwood TM-V71A (approx \$400) for the shack. Discussion followed. Motion passed.

Move to the Fire House building is still under development. Will probable happen this summer.

Club Activities & Program (KB1CIW & KB1FYL-P&E Co-Chair)

January Activity – Echo Linked Radio by Brian K1SOX, trustee for the 147.505 repeater.

ARES Region 2 training Saturday Jan 14th at the Guilford Fire House.

Upcoming contests

? ARRL VHF weekend January 21-22.

? 10/10 SSB Winter QSO Party weekend February 4-5.

Nets -

All nets are doing well. Reports in Key Klix & MARC forum.

HF-SSB 28.375 Tuesdays at 8:00 PM, Primary NC John K1VDF.

VHF-FM 147.36R Tuesdays at 7:00 PM, Primary NC Bob KB1CIW.

VHF-SSB 50.175 Mondays at 8 PM, Primary NC Jim N1ZN.

Jim noted 6 meters is very active with 6-8 check-ins, several out of state (VHF DX).

Castle Craig - (N1API-CM & CP)

10/10 QSO parties: SSB Feb 4-5, 2012 & Aug 4-5, 2012; Digital Apr 28-29, 2012 & Nov 10-11, 2012; CW May 5-6, 2012 & Oct 20-21, 2012.

AI N1API holding for 10/10 net 6:45 (EST) Friday Feb 3rd to kick off QSO party.

Membership - (KB1HCC)

Thirty-five (35) 2012 members more or less.

Interference and Technical - (WA1TRY)

Nothing to report.

Instruction - (VE-KE1AY, Instruction Facilitator - Open)

Additional testing and classes will be announced.

We need a training coordinator/facilitator. **Step up and help!!**

Candy Store - (N1ZN)

See Jim N1ZN for availability and details.

Key Klix - (WA1TRY & staff)

January issue delayed due to hospitalization of editor.

Jim N1ZN agreed to step in as interim editor.

EmComm - (WA1VXH)

There will be an MS walk-a-thon in Cheshire in April. We seem to be the only or one of the very few clubs supporting these activities.

Chris WA1VXH has submitted a request to the town for use of Marcus Cooke Park for Field Day.

Nutmeg Hamfest (October 2012)

With the likely purchase of Mountain Ridge by a non-profit group – New Life Church, the availability of the site for the 2012 Nutfest is in question. Additional sites are being looked into, but size, cost, volunteer needs are all considerations for a venue selection.

Miscellaneous

50/50 – None

Meeting Adjourned about 20:18

Submitted: Dan Murphy W1DMM, Secretary

What I really need is a day or two of free time so I could actually learn how to run the program. Lately free days are far and few between.

So I'm still using the same old application that I've been using for the last several years. It works well and is quick and easy. But it is kind of old and I sometimes have trouble importing pre-formatted newer documents. What I like about it is that it works in a PDF format. So when I'm done, I already have the whole issue ready to upload to the club BBS in a format that just about everyone can use.

With the new publisher software, I will have to convert the whole thing to a PDF format. That's not such a big problem, but it is just another step added to the process.

Station Activities

I've often wondered why our club's founding fathers chose to include with the officers of the club a fifth officer called the "Station Activities Manager"?

Evidently, they thought the position was important enough to make it a part of the official slate of club officers. The only thing I don't agree with is the term "Station Activities Manager". I would have rather it be simply "Station Manager". The problem for me is the word "Activities". And that is often confusing for many as they equate that with any kind of activity involving the club. And that is incorrect. It's really about the station itself.

One thing to keep in mind is that the position is optionally held by the Vice-President. If no one chooses to run as the SAM, then the duties fall upon the VP.

Here is what the position's duties are as described in the club Constitution and Bylaws.

a. The Station Activities Manager shall be responsible for activities involving the club sta

tion and/or stations operated in the name of the club. He shall insure that the club has access to any and all equipment needed to participate in club station activities.

b. The Station Activities Manager shall be responsible for all club nets and shall receive net reports to be forwarded to the Secretary.

c. The Station Activities Manager shall be responsible for Emergency Coordination within the club and with out side agencies. An emergency plan shall be kept on file with the Secretary.

As per section "c" I've always worked closely with the town of Wallingford Civil Preparedness people and now the Office of Emergency Management. A few years ago, Chris WA1VXH became the liaison with the town OEM's director Ernie Fratinni. Chris also handles all the Emcomm stuff for our club.

But I realize that we really don't have an actual written emergency plan on file with the club secretary. Yes, between Chris and I, there is no doubt we are ready and able to go into action and activate the club station if needed. But I guess I've been remiss in not actually having a written plan set up for how the club station, equipment and members would be used in an actual emergency. Now with the impending move to the new OEM building at the Cook Hill Fire station, it would be a good time to inventory our resources and put a plan in place.

Next month I'll have a rough draft of the MARC emergency use of our club's assets for your perusal.

de WA1TRY SAM

Don't forget .. Saturday 1 PM at our regular meeting place .. Come help clean out the building. Volunteers who help that day will have first pick of any unclaimed treasures.

Club Information Page

Meriden ARC PO Box 583 Meriden, CT 06450

MARC 2011 Officers

President - John Bee	N1GNV	N1GNV@arrl.net
Vice President - Jim Savage	N1ZN	james.savage@snet.net
Secretary - Dan Murphy	W1DMM	w1dmm@arrl.net
Treasurer - Jonathan Winslow	KB1HCC	
Station Activities Manager - Rich Aubin	WA1TRY	wa1try@cox.net

Committees

Key Klix Editor - Rich Aubin - WA1TRY WA1TRY@COX.NET
Key Klix Staff - Dan Murphy - W1DMM, John Bee - N1GNV
Program & Entertainment - Bob Carruthers -KB1FYL Bob Stephens- KB1CIW
Club QSL Manager - Bob Kaczor - KE1AU
VE/Education - Volunteer needed
Membership - "Haggie" Winslow - KB1HCC
Castle Craig - Al Kaiser - N1API
Interference & Technical - Rich Aubin WA1TRY

Club Nets

50.175 mhz	VHF SSB	Mondays	8:00 pm	(NC N1ZN & W1SKP)
28.375mhz	HF SSB	Tuesdays	8:00 pm	(NC K1VDF)
147.36 R	FM	Tuesdays	7:00 8:00 pm	(NC KB1CIW)

Membership/ Dues: regular \$15 Senior \$10 Family Member \$5.00

Business Meetings - 2nd Thursday Activity Meetings - 4th Thursday of the month.
All meetings start at 7:30 PM

Location of meetings: Wallingford Office of Emergency Management
284 Washington Street, Wallingford, Connecticut
(next to the Wallingford Senior Citizen Center)

Web site: <http://www.meridenarc.org/> BBS/Forum: <http://www.w1nrg.com/forum/>

Rogus Electronics

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

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

**Business Meeting
February 9th**

**Activity Meeting
Message Handling**

**Check club forums for
new information**

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

First Class