KEY KLIX

The Monthly Newsletter of the Meriden ARC *January 2012*

2011 Annual Meeting and Party !

On December 9th, 2011 MARC celebrated the end of 2011 with a gala party and the last official meeting for 2011. President John Bee, N1GNV opened the festivities with an introduction of the MARC slate of officers for 2012.

John Bee N1GNV - President
Jim Savage N1ZN - Vice President
Dan Murphy W1DMM - Secretary
Jonathan (Haggie) Winslow KB1HCC - Treasurer
Rich Aubin WA1TRY - Station Activities Manager

Outstanding individual efforts for those club members going above and beyond the call of duty were acknowledged. (see club "minutes" page)

Paul Ciezniak, K1SEZ placed first in the mixed mode, high power category for the club sponsored MARC DX Marathon Challenge Award.

The highlights of the evening were the awarding of the "Ham of the Year" and "Elmer of the Year" awards. This year Todd Olsen, K1TEO was voted by the club membership to receive the "Ham of the Year" award. The "Elmer of the Year" was awarded to John Bee, N1GNV.

After a several year hiatus the coveted Horses Butt Award was re-instated.

The ***winner?*** was WA1TRY.

Welcome back Rich!

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How's DX ?

Two upcoming DXpeditions are on tap for late January.

HK0NA is scheduled for January 21st to February 8th. They have a multi-national team of operators and will operate all bands 6 though 160, SSB, CW and RTTY. For those of you able to work them on 6 their grid will be EJ93fx and is of course rare. The will have an online log to check to see if your contact is good. QSLs go to N2OO or via OQRS. I did not see any information about Logbook of the World on the site but as with most DXpeditions, I expect that it will be posted anywhere from 6 months to a year after the DXpedition is finished in order to maximize the return of funds from QSL donations. They have a well done, (beautiful) web page at: http://hk0na.com/ As I look at the "Island report and photos" page there are no photos but a countdown clock to first QSO, 16 days, 22 hours, 54 minutes, 37 seconds. Four members of the team made a reconnaissance trip to the island in October of 2011. You may want to look at it, it shows how the operators will live at a base camp and then climb up and down the mountain every day to get to the stations. (I would suggest long pants and shirt selves for the climb you will see why.)

Another operation VP6T will be on from January 20th to February 4th. The team is the same one who activated TX4T French Polynesia in February 2010. So this looks like a good team, their goal is 30,000 contacts with special attention given to the low bands. They plan three stations active around the clock on 10 to 160 meters SSB, CW and RTTY. Check out their web page at: http://www.vp6t.org/ and note their listening frequencies, some are DOWN from the operating frequency rather than the normal UP.
This one will upload to Logbook of the World regularly and also use the bureau and direct to G3XTF for a QSL and also OQRS. There will also be an online log to see if you made it in.

Though tough to get to because of limited transportation, the operating conditions are almost resort style, they will be living a modern house. If you look at the pictures, the photographer is Andrew Randall Christian. Anyone remember Mutiny On The Bounty?

There are still decedents of Fletcher Christian who live on the island, I worked Tom Christian, VR6TC, (SK), for my VR6 country. At one time he was the only amateur radio operator there. Now there are others who live on the island licensed. Even though this one is not the rarest of the rare it is still a good catch especially if you need bands and modes for your DXCC.

GL AI N1API

Ed. Note. Check the club DX Forum for more recent news in the world of DX. Tnx to N1API www.w1nrg.com/forum/view_forum.php?id=7

Echo-Link Presentation

Come to the January Activity Meeting on Thursday January 26, 2012. You will learn about Echo Link from one of the masters.

Brian Freeman K1SOX runs the 505 machine that has had echo link capabilities for some years. This is a great opportunity to hear about one of our up and coming modes of communication. See You there.

A Bucket List The beginning of a new year is often a time to take stock of the accomplishments of the past and a time to resolve goals for the future. Of course, many say the ham community is an aging group and new resolutions are an ideal for a younger crowd. As an alternative, consider a Bucket List. A Bucket List may be the right thing to give some impetus to beat the actuarial list makers and a good reason to put your feet on the floor each morning.

1 – Operate a contest for a full 24 hours straight. Be sure to get some extra rest and exercise before hand and your shack is in full operating order.

2 – Complete and apply for your DXCC, VUCC, (5B)WAS or other major certificate.

3 – Put an island on the air for the IOTA contest in August. Row out to the Thimble Islands (Branford) or to Sheldon Island (Connecticut River) and set up your station.

4 – Learn how to solder properly.

5 – Join a DXpedition group and participate in one of their adventurous soirées that you have, so far, only read about.

6 – Initiate your own “DXpedition” to a rare grid square or rare county (even RI – a rare one on the west coast).
7 – Increase your straight key or paddle CW capability to conversational (15+ WPM) speed. If you are already there, then try for contest (20+ WPM) speed.

8 – Upgrade your license class.

9 – Build a homebrew antenna other than a simple dipole.

10 – Try out one of the new digital modes. This only requires a simple homebrew or commercial PC interface and a freeware software program.

11 – Organize your QSL card collection in a binder or photo album. You may reminisce about an old QSO and enjoy some pleasant memories.

12 – Operate on VHF/UHF from a hilltop. You may find a convenient drive-up scenic lookout place or bushwhack your way into the wild for your portable station.

13 – Write an article for QST or CQ magazine. This doesn’t have to be an extremely technical article, but one of a memorable operating experience, or an idea to make your shack more user friendly.

14 – Operate W1AW. For Connecticut residents, this is an easy one. Bring along a family member or neighborhood youngster and you may find a new candidate for amateur radio.

15 – Build a kit or homebrew device. Not necessarily a complex technical project, but a simple device or add-on to your shack.

16 – Operate a classic radio station. (Tubes, straight key, separate receiver/transmitter)

17 – Learn about and use those last four/five knobs or buttons on your rig that have been a mystery to you all this time.

18 – DX on AM or FM. Even SWL on AM or FM to foreign commercial stations.

19 – Provide communications for a local race, walkathon, parade.

20 – Operate from a bicycle or motorcycle. Of course, pull over before doing this one.

21 – Put up a super sized killer antenna for a

weekend of operating field day style. Something like an 80 meter delta loop.

22 – Operate QRP from a beach, park, or the woods.

23 – Learn to track and operate through one of the amateur satellites.

24 – Visit a nursing home and give a talk about your favorite ham radio experiences. The audience may not remember or even understand much, but they will love a visitor from the outside world.

25 – Become an Elmer.

You may have completed many of these already; this is only a sample list, but you get the idea. In some cases you can check off two or three of the above on a single adventure. Enjoy the future and good luck. **GD**

New Meeting Place

We will be moving to our new location at the Cook Hill Fire Station sometime this coming Spring. Until then, we will continue to meet at the Wallingford OEM building and of course the station will continue to be available for emergency communications and any club radio events.

Moving the the actual station will be interesting. We will have to disassemble the console and haul the sections up to the new spot.

When the time comes to move the station, we will be looking for volunteers (hopefully with strong backs). Actually it shouldn't be much of a problem once we break apart the six sections and move them out of the building with a hand truck.

We will be actually moving our meetings to the new place before we get the physical station installed. As mentioned before the earliest we will be moving will be early Spring ..

Station Activities

We should have a new addition to the club station in a week or so. That will be a small desktop computer all set up for contesting, logging and general club computer tasks.

Our laptop computer is working well and it's an excellent setup for temporary contest logging off site like Field Day. Or for showing a slide show or some other presentation at a meeting.

But it would actually be easier to have a permanent station console based computer that could be used as the primary storage and application driven device.

There are pros and cons to using a laptop for logging and contests. On the plus side is the advantage that you have a built in uninteruptable power supply.

When using a laptop, running off it's external AC supply, you have at least a few hours of actual battery powered run time that is automatically enabled when the AC main power goes out.

While they do make external AC computer back up power supplies, they generally only run your computer components for 15 minutes or so. And even a cheap 15 minute back up is going to cost a pretty penny. Normally those backup power supplies are only used to allow you to safely perform a shutdown and get everything turned off should the power go out.

An ideal setup would be something like we are now using at the club station. We have a laptop with about 3 hours of battery only run time. And a large external flat screen as well as a wireless keyboard and mouse. The only thing that would not available during a power outage would be the flat screen monitor and the antenna rotor. (both run on 110v AC) .

(continued on page 6)

Secretary Report & Minutes of Meriden Amateur Radio Club
December 2011

President John N1GNV chaired the evening activities on December 9, 2011. About 30-32 members and guests were present to enjoy the MARC Annual Christmas Party. The normal agenda was dispensed with.

A social gathering started the evening with many friends getting re-acquainted with tales of the past and discussions of hopes for the future. 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.

The chairman opened the official business meeting at 7:45 PM with a welcome to the attendees and an introduction of the MARC officers for 2012. 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	Don KE1AY
Bob KB1FYL	Al N1API	Bob KE1AU	Rich WA1TRY
John K1VDF	Mike K1KVM	Todd K1TDO	

Competition is usually intense for the renowned H.A. (horse's derriere) Award. Because the blunders were not observed or not uniquely irrefutable in recent years, the H.A. Award has remained stabled of late. But this year, the committee felt a return was necessary.
Rich WA1TRY continues to better his own repeater time-out record,

Dan W1DMM presented the awards and recognition to those members submitting log entries for the MARC DX Marathon Challenge Award. Dan noted that all HF bands were employed except 160 and all seven continents were contacted in SSB, CW and several digital modes dispelling any excuse that propagation worked against ham operations.
? Paul Ciezniak K1SEZ – First Place – Mixed Mode – High Power

Bill W1KKF 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.

Ham of the Year – Todd Olsen K1TDO
Elmer of the Year – John Bartscherer N1GNV

A raffle followed for a 50/50 drawing and for several door prizes. The evening concluded with heartfelt good wishes to all and a hope for a happy 2012.

Submitted Dan Murphy, W1DMM, Secretary

Station Activities (from page 4)

And any small 110v devices can be easily operated with a small 12v DC to 110v AC power inverter.

We could in effect continue an emergency operation during a complete power failure for several hours. No shut down or starting generators needed. For a prolonged outage, we would still have to start up a generator, but having a few hour buffer of continuous operation while the work crews get the back up system going would solve a lot of potential problems.

That is the “Pro” side of the system. The “Con” side is mostly about having an extra “thing” operating on the shelf. The laptop and all it's external connections (including the power supply) takes up space that is in limited supply in our shack.

The best solution is to have an internally rack mounted PC that runs off it's own battery supply. Ideally we would want a small low powered shelf top type computer that could be incorporated into the existing console. Yes we could just purchase an actual rack mount computer, but that will require an AC power source. Some of you may have seen my small shelf-book computer that we used for one of the Field Day stations last year. This unit is only about one inch high and about 9 inches square. Although it has an external “wall wart” type AC power supply, it can easily be powered by a DC to DC power inverter. Something that will bump a standard 12v battery up to 18 volts or so. A large gel cell or deep discharge wet cell battery could run that computer for 12 or more hours.

Bottom line, is that I would like to see the station console capable of running fully with only battery power. That would include a DC to AC inverter for all the needed equipment that needs AC and dual automatic lighting (110v AC to 12v DC) during power outages.

In my own shack I have a West Mountain 12 volt radio gear from a sealed high capacity wet cell battery.
I have a 35 amp power supply that is between the battery and the PWRGate. Normally the PWRgate has two inputs. One input from the battery. Another from the 35 amp AC supply. And a last output to the 12 volt radio bus. The thing has a sort of battery conditioner that keeps the battery at full charge. If my AC power goes out, then all power is being supplied by the battery, so there is no interruption in operation.

I also have some 12 volt emergency light panels that allow me to provide plenty of light that are also being powered (when needed) by the battery.

Lastly I have an 800 watt DC to AC power inverter to provide AC to the rest of the shack if needed.

So the next time the lights go out ... I'm ready!

I'd like to build all these capabilities into our club station console. Now that the console is fully operational radio-wise, it's time to finish the job with some emergency operation capability.

One problem still not solved is the issue of using lead acid deep discharge batteries. When we had the club shack upstairs in that nice big room, we had one deep discharge battery for each operating position. However safety requirements require that we have an eye-wash station within 10 or 15 feet of the batteries. So I'm working on an commercial type battery box with outside venting for any gases. Also something that is capable of keeping any battery acid leaks contained.

On another note .. all the radios and antennas are in great working order. I hear while I was away and recuperating the club voted to purchase a new mobile dual band rig. I haven't seen it yet but am sure I can get it installed.

de WA1TRY SAM

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/

Business Meeting
January 12

Activity Meeting
January 26

All about Echo-Link
By Brian K1SOX

Check club forums for
new information

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

First Class