



# Greater Norwalk Amateur Radio Club

## Newsletter

### "The Voice of GNARC"

#### April 2009

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## THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER:

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### THE PRESIDENT'S BLOG:

It might be a little too early to breathe a sigh of relief in saying that we have finally found ourselves a new Field Day site.

However, that might be so, as we have scouted (Tim/W1GIG) a very good corner of Cranberry Park that is ideal for a setup and has also met the approval of the city's fire chief who accompanied Tim on the field trip. Now we have to make a formal application to the Park and Recreation Dept and plead our cause. Let us hope for the best. We have commenced doing the necessary. Hopefully, we might have something positive to say on our meeting day on April 11<sup>th</sup>.

While we are organizing our thoughts about settling ourselves in a new site, we also have to make some plans to determine what we want out of Field Day this year. Last year we out did ourselves and had impressive scores in New England and nationwide. This was in spite of having lapses when radios were idle because of the absence of operators.

The challenge is, to maintain continuous on the air coverage for a 3A station for 24 hours. Can we do this? Of course we can, so how about making a serious attempt this time around. I am quite sure that we can better last year's performance.

Getting ourselves up and running should be a cinch, as you well know that some of us are well experienced in getting things together for the occasion. Let's get competitive guys and really put a serious effort into it this time around.

**FYI: The only continent without native reptiles or snakes is Antarctica.**

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## Next Meeting

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Our next meeting is on April 15<sup>th</sup> at 8pm at the Shop Rite community meeting room on Connecticut Ave., Norwalk, CT

Join the gang for pizza at John's Best , New Canaan Avenue, Norwalk, CT . The fun begins at 6pm

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## This Months Program

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Sean Lentner Graduated from the University of Connecticut and went on to work with Nyfix developing Trading Software and Disaster Recovery Solutions which were heavily used after 9-11.

In 2003, Lentner launched Lentner Technology Integrators to fill a void in the IT market servicing the SMB (Small Medium Business) market. With a staff of 4 LTI continues to grow providing real world solutions to his clients. Lentner designs and deploys custom Linux and Windows based solutions; providing seamless integration into a homogenous environment.

Lentner helps customers achieve better ROI by implementing Enterprise solution on a Small Business Budget. Located in Wilton Connecticut , LTI services the immediate Tri-State area.

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## Secretary's Minutes

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Minutes of the March 11, 2009 GNARC Meeting

Toy-K1WYQ opened the meeting at 7:57 PM, there were 29 members in attendance. He then turned it over to Steve-NA1SV who gave an interesting presentation on "Going HF Mobile". Why go HF mobile? To make contacts outside of the local area. Steve discussed the problems associated with going mobile on the low frequency bands. Areas covered were antennas and their efficiency, grounding, ignition noise and getting power safely to the radio.

Business Meeting:

Treasurer's Report: We incurred expenses for new repeater antennas and the club sweatshirts and T-shirts. The sweatshirt and T-shirt expenses should be made up by their sale. Please buy one or two.

Repeaters: The City will pick up the tower fee.

Field Day: Ziggy-N1ICL and Toy will coordinate FD this year.

ARES: Allan-NN1H is willing to train anyone on the material given in his recent presentations. The annual ARES meeting will take place at the Southington Hamfest on March 22 and will be a chance to meet the leadership. He mentioned that Toy and Tim-W1GIG are doing a great job of integrating Ham Radio into the City's Emergency Planning.

# **"The Voice of GNARC"**

**April 2009**

**Page 2**

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Balloon Project: The group will operate during CQ WW WPX SSB Contest on March 28-29 and will need extra manpower to erect the antenna on Saturday March 28.

Minutes: There were two corrections to the minutes: W1FSM is the repeater call, and Max Spitzer's call is W1MOS. The minutes were accepted with those two corrections.

New Business: Fred-K1FC announced that the Stamford repeater had been moved to a tower at Sterling Farms and has much better coverage from that 200 foot elevation. There is also a VE session on Saturday March 14.

Jay-NE2Q proposed approaching the Norwalk Public Library with the offer to set up a receiving station with a National NC-105 to demonstrate shortwave radio. He proposed a plaque recognizing GNARC so we would receive publicity. It was agreed that it was a good idea and he should contact the Library officials.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:58 PM

Respectfully submitted by Jim Francoeur-KC1FB, Secretary.

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## **ARRL News**

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FCC Clarifies What Constitutes an Amateur Radio Repeater

In December 2007, Gary Mitchell, WB6YRU, President of the Northern California Packet Association (NCPA), filed a Petition with the FCC, asking for the Commission to clarify the definition of a repeater. According to Part 97, Section 3 (a)(39), A repeater in the amateur service is "[a]n amateur station that simultaneously retransmits the transmission of another amateur station on a different channel or channels."

Mitchell sought clarification on the word "simultaneously," asking if it referred to the signal information being retransmitted, or to the fact that the receiver and transmitter must both be active at the same time while acting on the same signal information. On March 23, 2009, the Commission clarified that even if there is a slight delay between what is received and what it transmits (as in the case of D-STAR and other digital repeaters), it is considered simultaneous if the receiver and transmitter are both active at the same time.

Mitchell pointed out in his petition that while the Commission's Rules specify on which bands amateur repeaters may operate, "some amateur repeaters are operating on bands other than set forth in Section 97.205(b) with systems that are essentially voice repeater stations, but that digitize and retransmit the user's voice, on the theory

that because there is a small delay in retransmitting the signal of another amateur station, the signal is not 'simultaneously' retransmitted and, therefore, the system is not a repeater."

In its reply, the Commission pointed out that prior to 1994, a repeater was defined as "[a]n amateur station that automatically retransmits the signals of other stations." This, the Commission told Mitchell, was revised to clarify "that certain accommodations for message forwarding systems do not apply to other operating activities such as repeaters and auxiliary stations." The Commission proposed to define a repeater as "[a]n amateur station that instantaneously retransmits the transmission of another amateur station on a different channel or channels," but ultimately replaced "instantaneously" with "simultaneously" because commenters noted that there is always a small propagation delay through a repeater. As one commenter explained, "The word 'simultaneously' in this case means that the repeater is receiving and transmitting concurrently, whereas each signal might be slightly displaced in time between receive and transmit."

To be able to repeat another station's transmission, the Commission said that a repeater "must be able to receive a transmission from another station and retransmit it. Because the word 'simultaneously' in the definition is used to modify 'retransmit,' we believe it refers to a repeater station's transmitter being active when retransmitting the signal received by the repeater station's receiver from another amateur station. We conclude, therefore, that 'simultaneously' as used in the definition of a repeater refers to the receiver and transmitter both being active at the same time."

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## **Hamfests**

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**18 Apr 2009**

RASON Auction 2009, Radio Amateur Society of Norwich  
<http://www.RASON.org>

Talk-In: 146.730, 449.725 MHz (PL 156.7) - N1NW System

**Contact:** Gary W. Divan, WT1SND  
102 Plain Hill Road  
Baltic, CT 06330  
Phone: 860-884-4218  
Email: [wt1snd@portone.com](mailto:wt1snd@portone.com)

**Location:** Gales Ferry Firehouse, 1772 Route 12, Ledyard, CT

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# **"The Voice of GNARC"**

## **April 2009**

### **Page 3**

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#### **1-2 May 2009**

NEAR-Fest V  
New England Amateur Radio Festival  
<http://www.near-fest.com>  
Talk-In: 146.700 -600 (PL 88.5)

**Contact:** Mike Raisbeck, K1TWF  
c/o NEAR-Fest  
PO Box 511  
Hartford, VT 05047-0511  
Phone: 978-250-1235  
Email: k1twf@arrl.org

**Location:** Deerfield Fairgrounds  
Route 43, Deerfield, NH

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#### **26 Apr 2009**

Mount Beacon ARC  
<http://www.wr2abb.org>  
Talk-In: 146.970 (PL 100)

**Contact:** James Capicotto, K2JIM  
813 Heard Avenue  
Maybrook, NY 12543  
Phone: 845-427-2702  
Fax: 845-999-9999  
Email: k2jim@frontiernet.net

**Location:** Tymor Park  
249 Duncan Road, Lagrangeville, NY

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## **ARRL News**

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### **ARLB016 FCC Denies Petition to Increase Size of Amateur Radio Question Pools**

In April 2008, Michael Mancuso, KI4NGN, of Raleigh, North Carolina, filed a petition with the FCC, seeking to increase the size of the question pools that make up the Amateur Radio licensing exams. Mancuso sought to increase the question pool from 10 times the number of questions on an exam to 50 times more questions. On March 19, 2009, the Commission notified Mancuso that it was denying his petition.

In his 2008 petition, Mancuso claimed that the current question pool is too easy to memorize and "that there has been a significant increase in the number of Amateur Radio operators receiving their licenses over at least the last decade or more who do not appear to possess the knowledge indicated by the class of license that they have received. Most discussion about this topic, both on the

air and on Internet forums, generally refers to these widespread observations as the 'dumbing down' of Amateur Radio. It has been widely assumed that the cause of this observed situation is based upon the subject material addressed by the license examinations, that the material requirements specified for the examinations does [sic] not meet some minimum level of knowledge expected by some or many in the Amateur Radio community."

The FCC pointed out to Mancuso that each applicant for a new or upgraded Amateur Radio operator license "is required to pass a written examination in order to prove that he or she possesses the operational and technical qualifications required to perform properly the duties of an amateur service operator licensee, i.e., that he or she is qualified to be an amateur service licensee."

The Commission summed up Mancuso's petition, saying, "You argue that the current question pool size is no longer adequate, because online practice examinations enable examinees to memorize a question pool without fully comprehending the subject matter being tested. Consequently, you propose to increase the size of the question pools, in order to hinder memorization."

The Commission concluded that Mancuso did not present grounds for the Commission to amend its rules: "As noted above, the purpose of the examinations is not to demonstrate an applicant's comprehension of certain material, but rather to determine whether he or she can properly operate an amateur station. Moreover, your contention that there has been 'a significant increase in the number of Amateur Radio operators...who do not appear to possess the knowledge indicated by their class of license' is not supported by any data or facts."

The FCC pointed out to Mancuso that the Commission's Rules only dictate the minimum number of questions for each question pool for the three Amateur Radio license classes. This, the Commission told Mancuso, "does not prevent the National Conference of Volunteer Examiner Coordinators (NCVEC) from increasing the number of questions in a question pool should it decide that this is appropriate. We conclude, therefore, that the petition presents no evidence of an existing problem or other reason for a rule change."

**“The Voice of GNARC”**  
**April 2009**  
**Page 4**

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**WA7BNM Contest Calendar**  
**March 2009**

<b>Contest Name</b>	<b>Time/Date/(Band)</b>
ARLHS Annual Spring Lites QSO Party	0001Z, Apr 9 to 2359Z, Apr 19
NCCC Sprint Ladder	0230Z-0300Z, Apr 10
JIDX CW Contest	0700Z, Apr 11 to 1300Z, Apr 12
PODXS 070 Club PSK 31 Flavors Contest	1200-1800 local, Apr 11
Radio Maritime Day	1200Z, Apr 11 to 1200Z, Apr 12
EU Spring Sprint, CW	1600Z-1959Z, Apr 11
Georgia QSO Party	1800Z, Apr 11 to 0359Z, Apr 12 and 1400Z-2359Z, Apr 12
Yuri Gagarin International DX Contest	2100Z, Apr 11 to 2100Z, Apr 12
SKCC Weekend Sprint	0000Z-2400Z, Apr 12
UBA Spring Contest, SSB	0600Z-1000Z, Apr 12
Low Power Spring Sprint	1400Z-2000Z, Apr 13
222 MHz Spring Sprint	1900 local - 2300 local, Apr 14
NAQCC Straight Key/Bug Sprint	0030Z-0230Z, Apr 15
RSGB 80m Club Championship, SSB	1900Z-2030Z, Apr 15
NCCC Sprint Ladder	0230Z-0300Z, Apr 17
Holyland DX Contest	0000Z-2359Z, Apr 18
TARA Skirmish Digital Prefix Contest	0000Z-2400Z, Apr 18
ES Open HF Championship	0500Z-0559Z, Apr 18 and 0600Z-0659Z, Apr 18 and 0700Z-0759Z, Apr 18 and 0800Z-0859Z, Apr 18
Feld Hell Sprint	1200Z-1800Z, Apr 18
Michigan QSO Party	1600Z, Apr 18 to 0400Z, Apr 19
EU Spring Sprint, SSB	1600Z-1959Z, Apr 18
EA-QRP CW Contest	1700Z-2000Z, Apr 18 (20-10m) and 2000Z-2300Z, Apr 18 (80m) and 0700Z-1100Z, Apr 19 (40m) and 1100Z-1300Z, Apr 19 (20-10m)
Ontario QSO Party	1800Z, Apr 18 to 0500Z, Apr 19 and 1200Z-1800Z, Apr 19
YU DX Contest	2100Z, Apr 18 to 0500Z, Apr 19 and 0900Z-1700Z, Apr 19
Run for the Bacon QRP Contest	0100Z-0300Z, Apr 20
SKCC Sprint	0000Z-0200Z, Apr 22
432 MHz Spring Sprint	1900 local - 2300 local, Apr 22
RSGB 80m Club Championship, Data	1900Z-2030Z, Apr 23
NCCC Sprint Ladder	0230Z-0300Z, Apr 24
SP DX RTTY Contest	1200Z, Apr 25 to 1200Z, Apr 26
Helvetia Contest	1300Z, Apr 25 to 1259Z, Apr 26
Florida QSO Party	1600Z, Apr 25 to 0159Z, Apr 26 and 1200Z-2159Z, Apr 26
Nebraska QSO Party	1700Z, Apr 25 to 1700Z, Apr 26