



Greater Norwalk Amateur Radio Club

Newsletter

"The Voice of GNARC"

June 2010

THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER:

I am happy to state that our recent public service stint with the Bloomin Metric bike ride on May 23rd was a success. We have had a long standing relationship with this organization spanning over a period of 12 years. The day began with cold and dreary weather but soon settled to be a fine one and was accommodating to the bikers. Not so to my net control operators at Shady beach in Norwalk. They had, cold, windy and wet conditions but they endured and did an excellent job. We had fourteen operators in a variety of positions from net control, at food stops, on the roadway in sag wagons and operating independently. Congratulations guys on a job well done. We did have a fair share of blown tires and busted bikes that were all taken care of. There were 2800 riders on the road.

Our next public service event is with the MS bile ride from Sherwood Island in Westport on June 13th. This is a smaller event, with approximately 400-500 riders but equally important and I am hoping to get your support again for this one. I might emphasize, it is good practice for communications under a net control. You never know when you might be needed.

It is the beginning of the hurricane season and the national hurricane center in Miami is predicting 21 hurricanes this season with a 70% probability of the following ranges: 14-23 named storms including 8-14 hurricanes of which 3 -7 could be major ones in the Atlantic basin. As I write, tropical storm, Agatha has already hit the west coast of Guatemala and Mexico in Central America and is responsible for several deaths resulting from heavy rainfall and massive mud slides. Guatemala was hit with a double whammy as they are also coping with an active volcano that erupted and was responsible for 3 deaths. THE WATCHWORD IS PREPAREDNESS.

Our next meeting on June 9th will be devoted to Field Day preparations and no program speaker is scheduled, please come out to support your club for fun and competition

Next Meeting

Our next meeting is scheduled for Wed June 9th in the Community room of the Shop Rite supermarket on CT Ave at 8pm. Do not forget our gathering for pizza at Papa John's Pizza, 164 Main St., Norwalk, CT at 6pm.

Secretary's Minutes

Minutes of the May 12, 2010 GNARC Meeting

Toy-K1WYQ opened the meeting at 8:05 PM and announced that the scheduled speaker, Dr Wayne Gronlund/N1CLV had a work emergency and would not attend. He then turned the meeting over to Vlad-W1ZP. There were 22 members, including a new member Phil-N3KDJ and one guest Paul-WB2JVB, in attendance.

Vlad introduced Mike from iTownStore.com who gave us information on their product offering which is a free web site for the club where we can sell products with our club logo, like T-shirts, caps, sweat shirts and coffee mugs with a portion of the sale going to the club. They provide the web page and manufacture the products to our specifications and allow sales 24/7. He is sending more information to Toy.

Vlad then opened the meeting up to a discussion of Field Day, the most popular Ham event in the US and Canada. After going over the list of bonus points that we always max out, he asked our Field Day Coordinator Zig-N1ICL to give us a preview of this years effort. Zig stated we will be 3A again and we need CW operators since a few of our regulars are going to be away and volunteers to help with cooking and running the GOTA station. He asked Hugo-AA1XV to help find his replacement and Jim-KC1FB volunteered to head up the GOTA station.

There will be more discussion at our next meeting that focuses on our Field Day effort.

Business Meeting:

Public Service: We will be supporting the Bloomin' Metric on May 23 and the MS Bike Ride on June 13. Toy asked for 12 or more volunteers for the Bloomin' Metric and got commitments from that many at the meeting.

Minutes: Approved

Treasurer's Report: Finances are in good shape. We have about 80 paid up members. A question was raised as to whether that counted multiple members of a family membership.

New Business:

Vlad reported on the recent Board Meeting where it was decided to establish a Technical Committee with the goal of recruiting and developing technical resources for the club.

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Members of the committee are: Steve-NA1SV, Allan-NN1H, Curt-W1FSM, Tim-W1GIG, Zig-N1ICL and Vlad-W1ZP.

SARA: There will be a VE Session in July.

A question was raised as to whether the club should have a Facebook page and a Twitter presence referenced on our web page. This brought up our need for a Web Master to make these things happen.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:40 PM.

Respectfully submitted by Jim Francoeur-KC1FB, Secretary.

SARA To Sheffield Island

SARA is planning a ham radio field trip to Sheffield Island on Sunday June 13 and we would like to invite GNARC to join us. The field trip is being led by Adam (W1ASB).

The plan is to bring over his portable Yagi (a YP3), an HF transceiver, and a small generator and operate from the island for at least a couple of hours. Adam has obtained permission from the Sheffield Island people and is in the process of registering the field trip with the IOTA people since Sheffield Island has its own IOTA number. We expect to go over on the 11 am ferry and probably come back on the 5 pm ferry. I believe that the round trip ferry is something like \$32, although it might be less since June is still off-season.

Please note that our arrangements with Sheffield Island allow for only the one antenna, transceiver, and generator.

With that Yagi mounted on an island surrounded by salt water, we're hoping for good things in the DX department. At any rate, since Sheffield Island is not often on the air, we can expect a lot of QSOs with people collecting IOTA certifications.

The island does have shelter and bathrooms. In June, it will only have some light, non-cooked vending (water, candy bars) so you should plan to bring a picnic lunch if you want to come.

If you're interested, please contact Adam directly at w1asb.adam@gmail.com.

Jon
KB1QBZ

The \$103 Wonder

Yeah, right! That's was the first thought I had when I first saw the ads for the Wouxun KG-UVD1p dual band portable radio. A dual band HT for \$103 sound too good to be true and you know what they say.....

I had a few extra dollars kicking around so I ordered one from Radioshoppe888.com in Hong Kong. The amazing part was all the prices quote on the site includes shipping via registered mail from HK. Also included in the box are a 1400 mA Li-ion battery, drop in battery charger and surveillance type speaker mike. In addition, I ordered a spare 1700mAh Li-ion battery, a AA battery case, a mobile battery eliminator, antenna adapter and a weather-proof speaker-mike. Total price \$155 US!

The radio came in small cube shaped box wrapped in green paper and string looking like a Christmas present. The customs tag listed the contents as a "toy". A warning of what to expect, maybe?

Once unwrapped, I found the radio well packaged. The manual left a bit to be desired. The translation was done by someone for whom English is a second language however the pictorial was easy enough to follow. Soon I had it programmed for a local repeater.

The first thing that you will notice is the number steps that need to be followed in order to program a channel. The next thing is that the programming steps are not at all intuitive. Thank goodness that there is programming software. The software provided by Wouxun is fairly straight forward. The latest version (1.14) actually works very well and is reminiscent of Yaesu software from RT systems.

The radio boasts 2 VFOs and features dual in band receive....well, sorta. There is only 1 IF in the radio so if, say, A VFO is active, B VFO is locked out. There are 128 channels that can be programmed and can be tagged with up to 6 alpha-numeric characters. You can set radio to display FREQUENCY (VFO Mode), Channel, Channel/Freq, or Channel/NAME. The keypad does function as a DTMF pad, though you'll have to get used to the odd arrangement of the keys. The radio can be set for carrier squelch, CTCSS, or DCS. Another feature that will get your attention is the antenna connector. The KG-UVD1p features a reverse SMA connector. You will want to order a SMA to BNC adapter from the dealer.

When you look at the radio you will notice two buttons near the PTT switch. The upper one turns on an LED flashlight built into the radio and the lower one turns on an FM broadcast receiver.

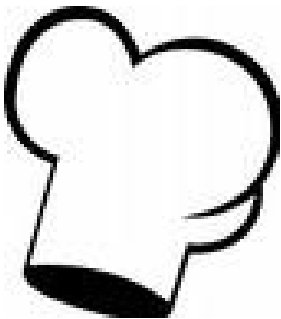
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Another strange feature, at least to US hams, is the radio is sold “opened”. That is to say that the non-ham portions of the band are not locked out. And yet the radio is FCC type accepted. How is this? The explanation is simple. The radio is type accepted as a commercial radio. I spoke at length with W4KMA, Ed Griffin, the US distributor, at Dayton this year. The Wouxun radios were designed for commercial use with the radios going to a retailer for programming. The radios programming is then locked and password protected so the end user can make no changes.

So, the big question is how well does it work. In a word, GREAT. The receive audio is clear and crisp and there is plenty of audio output. Transmit audio reports with both the speaker-mic and the built mic have been excellent. Battery life is surprisingly good. I use the radio while I’m on duty and it easily lasts through my 12 hour shift without a battery change.

The KG-UVD1p is not a full featured radio like the Yaesu VX-8. But for a third of the price the KG-UVD1p may be just enough radio to suit your needs.

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