

Good evening and welcome to the 2011 Greater Norwalk Amateur Radio Club Holiday Festivities....I'm Vlad W1ZP and this year's GNARC President...

I think it's appropriate to reflect a bit on the past year that I've been President...This has been a year of transition and change at GNARC...we've had big changes in the management of the club, Toy, K1WYQ decided in his infinite wisdom I think, to step down from the club presidency and work on his tan...and from the looks of him I think he succeeded. In fact Toy continues to be a very valuable asset to the club. He has taken an active role in ARES by becoming this area's DEC and most important, he has continued to provide me with some immeasurable help at meetings by running...and boy does he do it well...the raffle...And while that might seem like a small thing, the fleecing of a couple of extra bucks from each of you at every meeting does indeed help us defray our expenses a bit.

This year we've after many years of service another one of our very distinguished board members, after some deep soul searching voluntarily left our board, Ed K3EIN who served as a man of many hats in our club, treasurer, secretary, resident computer savant, webmaster, field day rules wizard and overall nice guy...decided that he did not want to be outdone by Toy's tan and set his sights on points south....Florida and more boating. Much to his credit and when the sun is behind the clouds Ed has continued to provide us with invaluable service as webmaster.

Another member that retired from our board was Allan, N1NH. Allan served in the capacity of repeater trustee for the club for many years. Allan was a long-time member of the club and Wilton resident who left the cold winds of New England for the milder southern climate to be next to his children and grandchildren. Of course the real secret is...yes he also wanted to work on his tan....

Now we come to those who served on the board this year....

For the first time this year, Gus W1BV assumed the role of club secretary. In that role Gus has really flourished because one of the important jobs for the club secretary is to take and publish on our website, the minutes of the meetings. Now for those of you that know Gus, you know what a social animal he really is....very gregarious....and he really loves amateur radio so naturally at the meetings he's anxious to have lots of interaction with other members...so much so that he keeps the rest of the board on our toes by making us remember what happened at the meetings later so that he can write up the minutes...now much to his credit...that's an important thing to do to keep our minds sharp as amateur radio operators. And of course Gus knows that acts accordingly...so thank you Gus for all you do for the club.

This year we had a new Vice President...Now let me ask you all a question...is there anybody..but I mean anybody who does NOT know who Dan, N1ZZ is? Now be careful if you raise your hand because after desert is served Dan will be signing autographs of his recent fashion debut in the CQ magazine September issue. This will be followed by a 15 minute presentation of Dan's accomplishments in amateur radio. For those of you

interested please see Dan at the conclusion of desert. Seriously though, Dan has been a true asset in his role as Vice President not the least of which was that he had a major role in planning and executing this party for which we should give him a hand.

After a number of years as Secretary, Jim, KC1FB assumed the role of treasurer. As I have heard it said that hams are naturally cheap...Jim fits that role perfectly as the guardian of the club coffers. In fact, Jim is far more concerned with how the club is going to make money than how the club is spending it...because he won't let us spend any. Seriously, Jim has been a great help to me and the club in sorting out our finances and recently in helping us regain our tax exempt status.

Rounding out our board this year...(no pun intended) is Steve, NA1SV in the role of repeater trustee. Steve has years of technical experience both as an amateur radio operator as well as a consultant and now works in the field of emergency communication for the State of CT. There are very few people more capable than Steve at running and solving issues involving repeaters. So we're very happy to have him on board and looking forward to showing him where our club repeaters are and how to access them.

This year Tim W1GIG joined our board in the role of "minister without portfolio." As happens ever year, Tim is one of GNARC's most valuable assets. He has helped us by raising money every year with the sale of used equipment. By managing the club's equipment inventory. Most of all however, Tim was invaluable this year in helping regain the club's tax exempt status that was lost and had to appeal. Tim was the one that helped gather the material we needed and put together the package that ultimately got the IRS to reissue the club's tax exempt status retroactively to the date that it was revoked. Tim is also responsible for heading up our nomination process for future board members. So, for all you do Tim, Thank you!

Now I'd like to comment a bit on some of our accomplishments this year as well as some of the challenges we faced.

If we had a motto for this year for the club it would be..."make this your club." What I mean by that is that I wanted to reach out to the membership and show them that this club can accommodate each and every interest of every member. All it takes is involvement. The message that I tried to get out this year is that involvement in an amateur radio club means more than paying your dues and coming to the meetings to listen to our programs. It means actively participating in the growth and health of our club and this hobby that we love so much. It means rolling up your sleeves and actually participating in our events. It means reaching out to new or inactive hams and getting them involved in the hobby and the club. It means taking an active role in learning about how our club repeaters work and helping to run them by participating in work crews. It means suggesting or giving a program at a club meeting. It means mentoring new hams and doing whatever possible to help other amateurs get on and stay on the air. It means

advocating our club's public image, to all who might be interested and even to some who just may want to listen. It means being an Elmer to another operator.

I think it's fair to say that we live in an age of shrinking participation in amateur radio clubs so we've tried to put aside inter club rivalries and reach out to other clubs in the hope of doing things cooperatively for the good of all our members. This year we've tried, successfully I think to lay the ground work for more activities with other ham radio clubs in the area. We hosted a multi-club meeting here with 2 other clubs and we had a joint meeting with the Fairfield club at their site. The purpose of these efforts comes from the realization that ham radio clubs are small and not getting any bigger and we can be stronger, more diverse and do more if we do it with other clubs. Also, its just fun to mingle share interests with other hams from other clubs.

This year Im happy to report we had our most successful Field Day in this club's history in 3A. Of course we came in number 1 in CT but we almost clinched it in the entire US if it hadn't been for a club that was in a higher category but went down to 3A due to lack of operators. Our balloon antenna flew again, our GOTA station attracted some new talent and overall we had a great time.

Let me briefly tell you about some of the challenges we face. Like all ham radio clubs our biggest challenge will be getting and keeping new members. We have an aging club with few young members and membership recruitment needs to become a priority if GNARC is to continue to thrive in the future.

This year we lost the use of the Norwalk firehouse as a place to store the club's equipment and we face the prospect of losing the tower as a location for our 2 meter repeater. These are issues that must be addressed and dealt with in the near future.

Let me end by telling you that I believe that GNARC can remain a vital force in the amateur radio world. That we have a fantastic nucleus of members that have wide ranging talents in all areas of amateur radio. That we have a camaraderie that is second to none. So despite what's going on out there we have a great club and as I look around this room a great group of people. So enjoy the festivites tonight, thank you all for coming and supporting GNARC and please accept our fond wishes for a happy and healthy holiday.