

October 2008

Issue 196

Next Meeting: Sunday October 12, 2008, 10:30AM Nutmeg Hamfest/ Connecticut State Convention MountainRidge Resort, Wallingford, CT

Captain's Cabin

Well, well well....

Now that the shock and awe is over for the 2007/2008 contest season, it's time to pick ourselves up, dust off the rig, tweak the antenna farm and put ourselves back in the seat to RECLAIM our position at the top of the contesting world in the Unlimited Contest Club competition! For those that might have missed it, the YCCC did lose to the Frankford Radio Club (our long time archrival) in both the CQ WW (Oct/Nov, 2007) and the ARRL DX Competition (Feb/Mar, 2008). I know this is very troubling news for all of us and now we are on the verge of another fun contest season – it's time to take it back!

And you now ask, how can this be done? Well as we have demonstrated in the past, if WE ALL GET ON AND MAKE POINTS (and have fun of course!) we win. No matter how much time you have to put into the CQ WW SSB test (first weekend for quality chair time); it will pay off for all of us.

The YCCC received a very nice invitation to attend and hold our general meeting at the Nutmeg Hamfest on Sunday, October 12. We were pleased to accept this offer and hope to turn it into a recruiting session as well as our big kick off for the CQ WW test. The location of the Hamfest is at a pretty cool place too – at a resort on top of a very nice hill in SW Connecticut (Wallingford). The address is highlighted elsewhere in this issue of the Scuttlebutt. What I find an interesting coincidence is the resort is just down the hill from where I lived when I came to CT in 1982. I rented a house down at the bottom of the hill but this place turned out to be quite a radio spot. And speaking of chair time, this was the first QTH I ever tried to go 48 hours in a contest. I took 4th in the USA that year (hey, with all that chair time, you gotta come up with some big numbers!) Achieving an op time of 48 hours did not come easily – I clearly recall the Sunday morning opening to Europe (rates typically are 150 per hour at some of the better stations) was a complete blur. My mind could not connect to what was happening for several hours – talk about being in a zone (and was NOT Zone 5), wow that was a real struggle to clear my head during that time!

I am not asking all members to drive themselves to this level of fun! (?) but I am expecting a certain level of participation (would be interesting if we all put in 48 hours but I digress). Put in the critical hours (European openings) if you cannot put in the full effort but DO GET ON! We need your points more than ever to take top honors in the 2008 CQ WW Contest.

In an effort to spur your fun, I have asked Tom, N1MM to bring us up to date on the MM Contest software (since it is one of the hottest programs around and comes from our own!) during the meeting. He will provide us some best practice offerings while using his software and as a group, you will hear plenty of great ideals to help you do better than you have ever done in a contest. I look forward to seeing many of you from the RI/CT/NY/NJ/Long Island part of the club at this meeting as well as the other regions. Although it will be a short meeting (because I want you to take in the rest of the events at this Hamfest too) there will be plenty of action for all of us. Please bring a friend to our meeting and enjoy the Hamfest! We'll have a very short business meeting so we can focus on getting on heads into the CQ WW Contest at the end of October.

73, Mark, K1RX

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MountainRidge Resort, Wallingford

Approx 1 mile from I-91, Exit 15 (CT Rt 68)



http://www.nutmeghamfest.com/

YCCC DXCC Challenge

Have you entered your DXCC Data? Lots have, but many haven't. The link is: <u>http://www.yccc.org/OnAir/</u> Click on "YCCC DXCC Challenge". Make your browser window W I D E R if you can't see the submission fields.

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Flotsam & Jetsam

Barnacle Jack Schuster, W1WEF w1wef@arrl.net

Ahoy Maties!

Barnacle JACK just returned from the high seas and totally lost track of time, forgetting to solicit input so this month FJ will be even lighter than usual.

If you've been reading my column, you know we like cruising. Our September cruise took us to Europe for the first time. We flew to London, visited 3 ports in Europe, and crossed the pond from Cork Ireland to St John's NL and then on to Boston. On our land excursions we didn't see a single ham antenna, but saw a great tower in Paris. Including the 79 ft antenna on top, the Rohn-Eiffel tower is 1063 ft high and until 1930 when the Chrysler building was completed, it was the tallest structure in the world.

Don't miss the October meeting at the Nutmeg Hamfest. The flea market has always been one of the best in New England with lots of vendors both inside and outdoors.

BJ has never done tower or antenna work with anyone without learning something new. Giving WV1K a hand today I did just that. Matt showed me a really nice waterproof box he got at Lowes, measuring about 6x6x5 for \$12. We put some VHF/UHF antennas up on Radio Shack TV masts that were the heaviest duty TV masting I've ever seen. A ten ft mast sells for \$16, and has what appears to be a good rust resistant coating. Five-foot masts that lock together are also available. Matt also had some insulated insulated GB cable staples from Home Depot that fit RG213 and make it easy to keep cable runs looking neat along wooden trim.



My New Tower

Did I mention my GOLD medal? Contesters can satisfy their competitive spirit aboard cruise ships. It's in our blood. We just thrive on competition. I took the GOLD, from a field of about 50 entries, and didn't have to wait a year for results. I took home the GOLD! I now know how Dorr and Grant felt in that first WRTC.

Oh...I almost forgot ... it was the beanbag toss competition. If you haven't gone on a cruise, try it, you'll like it!

73 See you in Wallingford.

Barnacle JACK W1WEF

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Meeting Presentation

NIMM Logger hints and kinks.

N1MM will be giving a talk at the Nutmeg Hamfest meeting.

Look for answers to your favorite N1MM questions:

Can a free logging program be any good? Setup: Packet setup & Multi-user Why are logs in databases and not files? Speaking of files, what files are created by the program and why? Secrets of the config file. I need a program expert, and there isn't one around. What to do? HELP! - Best search method for it Care and feeding - wl_cty.dat and master.dta maintenance ESM (enter sends messages) mode. Why would I want to use it? Why bandmaps are useful even to the unassisted. Why are some non-contesting feature requests implemented and others not?

CONTEST PREP CHECK LIST

This contest preparation checklist has the items that I've collected and found useful over the years. It is a big help for me in getting ready and

following through after the contest. Feel free to suggest any other items that you've also found to be helpful from your experience.

73, Chet, N8RA

DAYS AHEAD:

Review old scores and notes (printout select previous sum and breakdown sheet for reference during the contest)

Read latest contest rules

Make a "by hour" band strategy chart (check K6BV propagation charts, or generate own)

If a flare does hit - what are you going to do?

- Work as much OVER THE POLE stuff (JA/BV/DU/HL/VR2/YB etc) as you can on 10 and 15 on Friday night as that path will be the MOST SEVERELY IMPACTED by an advancing solar storm as the weekend ensues
- Be sure to hit 10M very hard as the band opens on Saturday morning if it looks like Sunday is going to be a "washout".
- Stay up LATER THAN PLANNED on Friday night looking over the pole on 20M if it looks like the solar disturbance is going to hit for real on Saturday sometime
- Check prop predictions at http://prop.hfradio.org

Freeze a jug of H2O for the cooler kept near the operating desk

Walk beverage and elevated radials and check beverage SWR

Check all antenna SWR's

Set 80M vertical dipole for ssb or cw

Check that rotary antennas are really pointing in the right direction- wind can rotate them on the mast or in rotor Set any side mounted yagis to desired direction, e.g. lowest 10M yagi to South or SW.

Call any neighbors that want notice when a contest is on so they can unplug computer speakers, etc.

Do hard physical exercise on Thursday before contest-this let's you sleep solidly Thursday night and also you will feel better when sitting in the chair during the contest

Internet

- CT or MM version update
- CTY file update, WL_CTY.DAT for MM
- get latest master.DTA file
- Dxpeditions listings NG3K.com- save webpages
- examine optimal working freq's from NW7US website

Test drive the latest version of MM or CT. Import latest country file In MM, set up function keys to point to voice files appropriate to the contest or set up CW messages Rerecord voice files as needed and then enhance them in Audacity. Set up ESM in CW contests? VHF contests: set PTT delay to 275 msec for 2M sequencer

Listen to 10M in mornings to know when band opens to EU, and listen for JA's on 15 and 10 at sunset to know what to expect.

Do a master reset on Orion and reload current params- press and hold Main RX/TX Ant1 button on power up

Restock snack foods

- Dr. Pepper (diet)
- Coffee- already ground
- Smoked cheese
- Yogurt
- Grapes
- Raisins
- Fig Newtons

YCCC Scuttlebutt

- Wheat thins
- Fruit juice
- Pop tarts
- Peanuts or other nuts
- Balance bars
- chocolate

DAY OF CONTEST:

Connect beverage (antenna)
Set computer clocks (Dimension 4 now handles this)
Unplug unused computer cables, USB devices
Clean and dust shack and run the air purifier
Take photos of the shack and antenna's major changes/improvements for the record
Set up cooler in shack
Disable CO alarm if this is an HF contest using 20M
Plug in foot warmer mat and Orion heatsink fan
Backup MM *.mdb files and logger .ini file or entire N1MM logger subdirectory Use File/Copy (and compact) database. Then use the COPY for your log going forward. Compacting can improve performance. Do it before any major contest effort you plan. That is more than enough.
Start new database?
<u>AFTER CONTEST:</u>
Backup MM *.mdb files and logger .ini file or entire N1MM logger subdirectory

Unplug foot warmer mat and Orion heatsink fan

Re-enable CO alarm

In MM, review view/suspect calls, suspect zones, varying zones, notes. Run rescore contest if any changes.

In MM, update VHF contest history file as appropriate and export a copy to file

In MM do file/export/export Cabrillo and ADIF files

Write the contest summary while still fresh in mind; refer to MM notes file for inclusion.

Submit 3830 score

Submit score and write-up to YCCC reflector and scorekeeper

Send log to contest sponsor and cc k5zd@contesting.com for SCP Do not cross this off until you receive a good log confirmation from robot- VERY IMPORTANT!!

Update DX4WIN with contest Q's

Update LOTW from last submission date

Check DX Summit spot report if interested

An additional source of Contest Preparation Tips: <u>http://k9jy.com/blog/2007/10/10/30-days-30-ham-radio-contesting-tips/</u>

YCCC Regular Meeting, August 23, 2008—Boxborough, MA

The August meeting was called to order at 4:06 pm by Mark, K1RX, at the Holiday Inn Boxborough Woods, following the club's traditional open session at the bi-annual ARRL New England Convention. The three-hour YCCC agenda featured presentations by John, N1PGA, on low-power contesting with all-wire antennas and Ed, N1UR, on low-power contesting from VT with SO2R and more serious antennas. Ed's xyl, Christine, KB1PQN, joined Ed in a photo presentation of their Spratly DXpedition in March.

Ed and Christine were followed by the featured speaker, Rob Sherwood, NC0B, an expert on receiver performance and testing, who was YCCC's special guest speaker at Boxboro 2008. Rob gave a great presentation on the finer points of HF receiver design developments over the past few decades, and explained how he compares and contrasts receivers in his lab at Sherwood Engineering in Colorado.

For the YCCC business meeting portion of the afternoon, Mark began with a round of self-introductions by the attendees, numbering at least 72. The first order of business was an announcement by Mark that the meeting would culminate in a raffle drawing to fund the club's commitment to the ARRL Youth Scholarship Program. Prizes included an MFJ 989-D high power tuner, a Heil headset, a West Mountain Radio RIGblaster, and numerous ARRL books. Tickets were offered at \$5 each or \$20 for five. Sales were brisk, keeping K1EP and W1EBI busy.

George, W1EBI, gave the secretary's report. George summarized the minutes of the April election meeting, which had been omitted from the August issue of Scuttlebutt. The club added six new members at the April meeting:

Steven Jobes, W1DXH	William Meagher, KB1QGU	Peter Speen, K1SUB
Nat Henrickson, NG1Z	Ron Quattrochi, WO1Z	David McCurdy, K1ZG
		David McCuldy, K120

Two additional members were added at a CT area meeting in May:

Harlan Ford, W1QH Peter Fegley, KA1SYG

As of 20 August, active membership was 347, down from 388 on 1 April.

Ed, K1EP, gave the treasurer's report. Motions were made and seconded to accept the treasurer's report and the secretary's report.

Mark reminded all that the contest season was approaching and exhorted every member to get his/her station ready. Jerry, K0TV, is running the Find-A-Chair program for all members fielding a multi-op station to utilize to find needed operators, for all seasoned ops seeking a team to join, for all ops new to contesting to learn from participating on a multi-op team, and for single ops wanting to share time between a modest home station and a competitive multi.

Mark turned the meeting over to Paul, K1XM, and Charlotte, KQ1F, who delivered one of their memorable photo-laden presentations on their experiences in Senegal for their recent 6V7D contest DXpeditions.

By stroke of surprise planning of the Boxboro event and bad luck for YCCC, the presentation by Paul and Charlotte had to be interrupted at 5:00 for the raffle drawing by the FEMARA sponsors, causing the conference room to be vacated abruptly. After a lengthy delay, most of our meeting attendees trickled back to the room set up for the W1A special event station for our concluding raffle drawing. The following members managed to win prizes:

RIGblaster	N1NK	AH-4 mobile tuner	WB1EDI	MFJ 989-D tuner	K1EBY
Heil headset	KB1MOT	Balun	N1NK	K1VR book	N1IW
Polyphaser coax	K1RX & K1KI				
NCJ CD	K1QEH & W1WEF				
ARRL book	W1MAW, K1OZ, W1TJL	, KI1B, N1PGA, W	1NA, W1EBI, K1QEH,	W1STT	

During the meeting, eleven new member candidates submitted applications to join YCCC. A welcome roster of the new crew by New Member Manager, Khrystyne, K1SFA, appears elsewhere in this issue.

Respectfully submitted, George Harlem, W1EBI Secretary

Note: The online roster has been updated to reflect all changes and new members as of Boxboro 2008. Please address any questions or corrections to: secretary(at)yccc(dot)org. - George W1EBI

Cable Labels - What do You Use!

George, W1EBI Sharpmark has some nifty products with clear laminate, Free software but expensive labels.

Address labels will work fine, if a bit permanent.

Mike, W1JQ I just use some very inexpensive electrical tape that I found in assorted colors. (Not even sure it's electrical tape.)

I used 1, 2, or 3 bands behind the connector, and keep a document wth a key to the color codes.

- John, W2GB I use some cable markers that have a zip tie closure with a 1x1/2 red tag on the end and space enough to write with a sharpie
- **Jim. K1IR** Some of this depends on whether you are talking about the inside or outside application. I've done a couple of different things here. Not all worked well:

1. Color-coded electrical tape - can't be understood without knowing the code, and not for complex labeling, but reliable and effective. You can get rolls in a lot of colors. I have used different numbers of wraps of tape for cablecoding on the tower and indoors. For example, with as many as nine monoband antenna cables coming into three stack switching boxes at the base of the tower, this method works great. Three colors are used to distinguish Upper[Green]/Middle[White]/Low[Orange]. The number of wraps indicates the band. 1, 2 or 3 for 10, 15 and 20m. Easy to read even from a great distance. I have also used multiple colors of small tie-wraps in the same way, leaving the extra in place like a 'flag'.

2. Brother P-Touch labels. I use a lot of these. They can be simply wrapped, applied length-wise or used flagstyle. No issues when used indoors. Outdoor use is more of a problem. I have wrapped clear plastic tape over a length-wise label to protect it, but outdoor weather defeats the adhesive pretty quickly. I'd like to hear what others have found effective.

Chet, N8RA If indoors or in protective boxes, I use white electrical tape and a sharpie marker- these are very easy to read.

If subjected to the weather, I use 4" copper tags that have a hole on one end for attaching it to the cable with a copper wire twisted around it. The thin soft copper tags are easy to "emboss" with a ball point pen and are available from garden supply stores and cost \$3.95 for 20.

- **Rex, K1HI** I use paper and scotch tape (several times around), then seal with electrical tape...
- Matt, WV1K Lowes stores do carry a set of five colored tapes, in a pack. I use this system due to the visibility.
- Stan, W1LE Outside labeling:

Stamp stainless steel ty-wrap type bands with an encoded impression or other info. Lasts a very long time.

S.S. ty-wraps are available at the Harbor freight outlets

If you only need a few, ask PANDUIT for some samples.

All other methods mentioned fail in time, in an outside application. Colored tape fades and enbrittles, sharpie markings last only a short time outside, conventional stick on cable labels are great for inside, but not outside.

Jim, W1KQ I use colored electrical tape for outdoor coaxial cables...red, blue, green, gray, white, yellow, and of course black. (Many combinations of colors can be used if there are that many cables to label) For indoor coaxial cables I use colored electrical tape and red Sharpie. For radio/computer accessory cables Brother P-touch labels and Scotch tape over the label keeps the lettering from wearing.

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Contest Club Finland's PileUP!

The current issue of the Contest Club Finland's publication PileUP includes articles (in English for us non-Finnish reading contesters) on "Using Trees to Support Low Band Antennas" by K9LA, "Pile Up Net: A Real-time Scoring System for Pile Up Competions" by NO5W, "Remote Fairness" by OH3BU and various articles on recent contest operations.

Latest issue can be downloaded from: http://www.helsinki.fi/~korpela/PU/PU.html

The Next PileUP issue is scheduled for mid-November.

CREW NEWS

S. Khrystyne Keane, K1SFA - New Member Manager

New & Returned Crew

April Meeting:			
Steven Jobes, W1DXH		William Meagher, KB1QGU	
Peter Speen, K1SUB		Nat Henrickson, NG1Z	
Ron Quattrochi, WQ1Z		David McCurdy, K1ZG	
May CT Area Meeting:			
Harlan Ford, W1QH		Peter Fegley, KA1SYG	
Harlan Ford, w 1Q11		Teler regicy, KAISTO	
August Meeting (Boxboro Conventio	on):		
Don Wilson, K1IN	Windsor, CT	E. Jonathan Hardy, KB1KIX	Hartford, CT
Brenda Lisitano, KB1MYK	Southington, CT	Lori Lisitano, KB1MYL	Southington, CT
Alan Lisitano, W1LOZ	Southington, CT	Spencer Borden, AB1HO	Uxbridge, MA
Jim Podsiadlo, AE1C	Mendon, MA	Peter Drexel, AE1T	Plymouth, MA
Blake Edward, KB1OEU	Windsor, MA	Daniel Rajczyk, N1KJN	Haverhill, MA
Bruce Pierce, N1YCW	N Adams, MA	Ed LaJoie, W1MA	Norwood, MA
Dennis Markell, N1IMW	Bedford, NH	Allison Williams, N1QEH	Peabody, NH
Thomas Poland, N9NC	Lee, NH	Ted Perry, W1WFZ	Coventry, RI
Paul Gayet, AA1SU	Essex Junction, VT	-	

Movers & Shakers

Congratulations to KB1MOT who is now WF1R!

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CQWW RTTY Scores

21,067,437 and Counting

Congratulations to everyone on their fine showing in CQWW RTTY and thanks to Dennis, W1UE for collecting the posted scores

AE1C 44,363	EW1AR 1,350,000	K0TV	1,221,246
K1FWE 274,740	K1IB 129,360	K1SEZ	109,098
K1TTT 4,867,500	KE1FO 116,622	KV1J	215,325
KA2KON 202,860	K5ZD 1,862,448	N1BAA	1,393,200
N1MGO 636,267	N1SV 969,150	NE1F	102,312
NJ1F 192,517	W1CDX 921,492	W1EQ	427,680
W1MAT 45,347	W1UE 3,808,695	W1ZK	462,696
WA1Z 1,489,011	WB1EDI 209,844	W2JU	15,664
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FlexRadio Announces 2 New Radios!

The FLEX-3000 is a scaled down SDR is designed to fit in a laptop computer case, it measures only 12.25" x 12.25" x 1.75" and weighs just 7 lbs. Like its big brother, the FLEX-3000 is a 100W, 160-6m, all mode transceiver that connects to your computer via FireWire cable. A built-in tuner is included. Delivery is expected to begin in January 2009.

The FLEX-1500 is a QRP SDR in a compact package that connects to your computer via a single USB cable. The FLEX-1500 covers 160-6m with power output between 500mw and 1 Watt. Expected delivery is April 2009 or earlier.

For more information see: <u>http://www.flex-radio.com/</u>

YCCC CLUB RESOURCE INFORMATION

DUES AND MEMBERSHIP STUFF Dues are payable as of the April election meeting, which begins our club "contest year". The YCCC has adopted a multi-tiered membership format as follows: Please note that payment of dues IS NOT a prerequisite for contributing scores to the Club aggregate, but IS for the various YCCC Awards Programs

Full Member - \$20 (\$35/2 yr) (Eligible for YCCC awards programs and paper delivery of Club newsletter)

Full Member - \$15 (\$25/2 yr) (Eligible for YCCC awards programs and electronic "Ebutt" delivery of Club newsletter)

Family Member - \$0 (Grants full membership to all amateurs residing at one domicile on payment of one member's "Full Member" annual dues and entitlement to one Club Newsletter sent to one domicile or email address. All members of said family are eligible for YCCC awards programs.)

Student Member - \$10 (Grants full membership to students at a reduced level. Eligible for YCCC awards programs and paper or electronic delivery of the Club Newsletter.)

Subscription - \$** (A "friend of YCCC" - not a member but a possible candidate for future membership. Receives club newsletter only in paper or electronic form. Fee basis is \$20 for overseas paper delivery, \$15 for domestic paper delivery and \$10 for electronic "Ebutt" delivery domestically or overseas.)

Club members who move out of club territory and so are not eligible to contribute to club aggregate scores automatically become subscribers. New members who join at the February meeting are credited with dues for the year beginning the following April. You can tell if you owe dues by checking your 'Butt mailing label. **Mail your dues to the club treasurer, Ed Parish, K1EP, 9 Spoon Way, N. Reading, MA 01864**

SCUTTLEBUTT ARTICLES should be sent to the Scuttlebutt editor, Steve Rodowicz N1SR, preferably by E-mail at **n1sr@arrl.net** or on $3\frac{1}{2}$ " disk (in MS-Word format or text file) by snail mail to Steve Rodowicz, 809 Pendleton Avenue, Chicopee, MA 01020. The deadline for each issue is the 10th of the preceding month.

Scuttlebutt Advertising: Nominal Business Card sized ad, \$50 per year (6 appearances)

CONTEST SCORES should be sent to the club scorekeeper, Dave Hoaglin, K1HT, preferably by E-mail at **scores@yccc.org**. Please include details such as numbers of QSOs, QSO points (if appropriate), and multipliers (all types); entry category; and power.

CLUB GOODIES

BADGES YCCC badges are available from Ric, KV1W. Send \$2, name and call desired on the badge, and your mailing address to: Ric Plummer - YCCC Badge, PO Box 1158, Berlin, MA 01503-2158.

APPAREL Contact Bob Rogers KB1LN@yahoo.com

YCCC LOGO ITEMS http://www.cafepress.com/n1ik

QSL CARDS are ordered through Burt Eldridge, W1ZS. To order, send Burt an email at **w1zs@arrl.net**, detailing card information per "QSL Request" form available at <u>http://www.yccc.org/members/yccc_qsl.htm</u>. You will receive a proof by email. Approve the proof, making any corrections, and return to Burt *with payment* (make checks out to Burt, not YCCC). Current price is \$50 (delivered) for 1,000 cards. Also available is the glossy version for \$70/1000.

MEMBERSHIP ROSTER is posed on the YCCC website. Updates are published in 'Movers and Shakers' when members move or change callsigns.

COMPUTER STUFF *INTERNET REFLECTOR* There is an Internet mailing list for YCCC members. To subscribe, send mail to yccc-REQUEST@yccc.org. Insert only the word "subscribe" in the subject of the mail message. (Do not send messages to the reflector that have file attachments, HTML formatting, use boldface or other fancy fonts, etc.)

WWW HOME PAGE Come visit us at http://www.yccc.org Our Webmaster is Mike Gilmer, N2MG.

ADMINISTRATIVE STUFF *The W1 QSL BUREAU* is sponsored by the YCCC. Keep your account up to date by sending a check. Stamps are sold at face value, envelopes are 20 cents each. Address: W1 QSL Bureau, PO Box 7388, Milford, MA 01757-7388. Email address: w1qsl@yccc.org.

ARRL COMMITTEE REPS are:

CAC: New England Dick Green, WC1M Hudson George Wilner, K2ONP Atlantic Michael Gilmer, N2MG DXAC: New England Bob Beaudet, W1YRC Hudson John Sawina, NA2R Atlantic Chris Shalvoy, K2CS ARRL LIAISON: Tom Frenaye, K1KI.

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Next Meeting: Sunday, October 12, 10:30AM Nutmeg Hamfest / Connecticut State Convention MountainRidge Resort, Wallingford, CT (Directions on Page 2)

The YCCC Scuttlebutt 18 Bancroft Tower Road Worcester, MA 01609

FIRST CLASS MAIL