



Sparks from the Spa



A PUBLICATION OF SARATOGA COUNTY AMATEUR RADIO ASSOCIATION



President Tim Kemp accepts an outstanding sponsor plaque from the American Diabetes Association representative Jerry Jurzinski at our April meeting. This plaque acknowledges the contribution made by our club members at the Jun 2013 Tour de Cure. This year's Tour is scheduled for June 1. Lee Palmer WB2NSC (left) organizes the Amateur Radio effort.

Late Breaking news

On Sunday 5-4 the club provided support for the MS Walk in Saratoga. Participating hams were N2SQO, AC2IE, KG2H, KC2MSB, WA2TTP, KL7TJZ, KC2YLM, and N2MBX. Rain threatened the event, but most of the rain stopped before the start of the event. It was a little like Field day in that respect!!

A note from Lee—WB2NSC about this year's Tour de Cure

We attended a logistics meeting last week. The routes and rest stops are unchanged from last year. The ADA is in discussions with Saratoga Water Company to provide a water truck that will supply the rest stops and then resupply as necessary throughout the day. Hopefully it will reduce some of the running around of SAG and Floater vehicles. They are also working on trying to station some bike mechanics at key rest stops.

Could use two or three more radio operators. If you know of someone please send them my direction.

Will keep you posted on any changes and will send out a draft schedule mid May.

If your availability changes let me know!

President's Message May 2014 - Tim Kemp N2MBX

The activities are ramping up and I hope to see some new faces at the events. These events are the perfect training ground for new Hams to get involved with Public Service. Even if you don't have all the gear yet, you can learn from the rest of the group what works and what doesn't. If you don't have the gear, extra rigs and antennas can be provided to get on the air. If you do have some new gear and are having trouble getting it to work, most likely someone else can help out.

I am going to repeat last month's paragraph about the coming elections. It's important, so please read below and raise your hand at the June meeting.

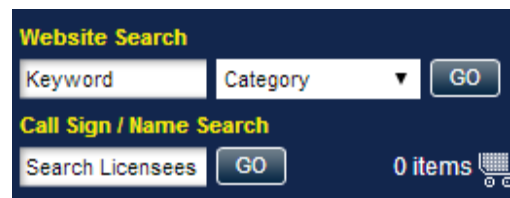
SCARA elections are also on the horizon, June meeting. We need a Vice President, Newsletter Editor and a Secretary this year. When elections come around in June, please consider filling one of the Board positions. I know that I will run for President again, but my plans call for not making it to all the meetings in 2015, so we will need to fill the Vice President position.

Editor's note

I just want to reiterate the importance of the elections. Please consider stepping up to take some active part in the organization. Elections are important. The individual jobs are not difficult. The secretary takes some notes, the Vice President is there for backup to the president. The board members provide valuable input and guidance for the club. When vacancies occur, others have to step up and handle those duties. Many hands lighten the load.

Jim KG2H

Have you checked the expiration date on your license? It's very easy to do. One way to do it is to go to WWW.ARRL.ORG, and just fill in you call sign in the search box. You do not need to be a member.



Website Search

Keyword Category GO

Call Sign / Name Search

Search Licenses GO 0 items

ARES Report—Phil Weissman KC2YLM

The spring ENY section ARES/RACES meeting was held on April 19th 2014 in Woodstock, NY. KC2YLM(Phil) attended as the representative from Saratoga County.

Topics discussed during the meeting were:

1. Goals for 2014
2. Plans for this year's Simulated Emergency Test (S.E.T.) -to be held 10/11/14
3. Overview of NBEMS and FLDGI
4. Overview of Pactor4
5. Discussion of recruitment methods for new members.
5. Selection of location for fall meeting(Orange or Westchester County).

Anyone interested in joining ARES or participating in an ARES activity should contact W2EMS (Fred), N2MBX (Tim), or KC2YLM (Phil). They can be contacted at: W2EMS@ARRL.NET
N2MBX@ARRL.NET KC2YLM@ARRL.NET

Ham Radio is on the grow. Jim KG2H

As a volunteer examiner, I received this information from the ARRL VEC office. Who says ham radio is a dying breed?

NEW and UPGRADED FCC LICENSES ISSUED BY YEAR

FIRST QUARTER RESULTS

<u>FCC License Action</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>	<u>2013</u>	<u>2014</u>
New Licenses	5,809	7,532	7,732	8,943
Upgraded Licenses	2,656	2,824	2,414	2,719
Total Issued	8,465	10,365	10,146	11,662

EchoLink on K2DLL - Tim Kemp N2MBX

EchoLink is back up and running on the K2DLL Repeaters, 147.00 and 147.24. Back in May 2013 the EchoLink hardware was relocated to the Wilton EMS building. After weeks of hard work by the WEMS IT consultant, we had EchoLink running with the WEMS professional router. Then in November, the super duper router crashed. A new one was installed but all the settings that allowed Echolink to work were lost.

The IT consultant could not duplicate the settings, so a new idea was hatched. K2DLL now has it's own simple router and IP address enabling EchoLink to live again. We will now be able to operate other Ham Radio related devices like remote operation.

Try it out sometime.

Field Day 2014 - May Update - Tim Kemp N2MBX

I have the 2014 pins already and posters. The posters will be available at the meeting so that we can place them on community bulletin boards such as in each Stewarts. I will be doing more behind the scenes preparation soon, but could use help. Dave NR2J did a great job getting food donations last year, but he could use some help starting right now to line up donations for this year.

The club's Kenwood 440 has new filters and is deemed ready for action by the technical team. The Ten-Tec HF rig has been sent back to bench for further adjustment so that hopefully it will be ready for action. The North East Mobile Search and Rescue (NEMSAR) RV is reserved and barring any lost persons will attend Field Day with its air conditioned operating position and generators.



We did great in points last year; I know we can improve this year.

Make plans now to attend this year's Field Day on the 4th full weekend in June, the 27th - 29th of June 2014. Once again K2DLL will go on the air from the Wilton EMS building. We had 3 air conditioned operating points last year and are planning to do it again this year. I expect to have some changes to our antennas and their locations to minimize interference. The Get On The Air (GOTA) station will also be active for Hams that have not ever participated before in a Field Day or have been inactive for a long time. The GOTA station is also for non Hams, es-

pecially youth. This is the perfect time to get the neighbors, the kids, the grandkids and any friends on the air. We also eat well at Field Day, last year we had steak and chicken for dinner.

Bring any ideas for Field Day 2014 to the May meeting or send me an email: N2MBX@arrl.net



Repeater report Jim McKnight K2LM

Because of the winter that would never leave, we are behind in doing the usual repeater maintenance.

Still in the works are:

- 1) getting the radio shelter from NYSP and installing it at Providence
- 2) Moving our Providence antennas to the new county tower
- 3) Updating all repeaters from GE MastrII to MastrIII, which are still in production. The repeaters are gifts from Saratoga County. They took them out of service when they went to their new radio system
- 4) Change the antennas on 147.000 and 448.225 Spruce Mountain repeaters to hopefully get better coverage. This is a priority before the Lions Club Duathlon and Tour de Cure.

Thank you for the reports of the link dropping out during the Sunday night nets. I am still trying to determine what is causing the problem.

Echolink and Wilton EMS internet

Thanks to Wilton Emergency Corp, we now have our own IP address and hence our own internet. The router is in our radio room. So with a long CAT5 cable any speaker that needs high speed internet for a demonstration can now have that available. Plus we can use the internet for field day, etc.

K2LM 4.11.2014

WRTC 2014 Brian Szewczyk NJ1F (copyright 2014)

As amateur radio operators know our hobby offers a lifetime of new challenges, modes, bands and experimentation. During my close to forty years of being a licensed ham radio operator few things have remained constant like my interest and involvement in contesting. I enjoy HF and VHF contesting. I have made qsos on all ham bands from 160 meters thru 47 GHz. To me there is nothing like running stations at rates of 250 qsos per hour on HF. The opposite extreme is spending an hour to make a single QSO on 47 GHz over a 60 mile path. I enjoy the competition and the challenge.

I am writing this during the first week of March, the winter Olympics have just concluded. I enjoyed watching the best of the best compete to be named the top of their sport. Well it turns out that our hobby offers an Olympic type competition every four years called the WRTC. WRTC is short for World Radio Team Competition and in 2014 the WRTC will be held in Massachusetts during the IARU HF contest in July. Like the Olympics the WRTC will feature 59 teams of the best contest operators from around the world. The teams were selected by the operator's performance in various contests over the past three years. All regions of the world are represented including 14 teams from the USA. Like the Olympics the teams will participate in an opening, closing ceremony as well as many non ham radio activities.

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I have been involved with the WRTC the past two summers as a "Beam Team Captain" and "Station Site Manager". My "team" was responsible for assembling the antenna system, putting up the operating tent and generator. It is kind of like being the driver of the Zamboni machine or groomer of the ski slopes, with one exception that I was able to participate in a mini WRTC competition using the hardware that will be used in the actual competition this summer. Plus these two operations served as tests for the hardware and locations of the stations.

You see in most Amateur radio contests the playing field is not really equal. Some are fortunate to live on a mountain top, island near the equator, or have a 10's of acres of land to build multiple towers and large antenna arrays. While others live in apartments and are limited to very low power or indoor, small hamstick type antennas. The difference in stations location or antennas can have a dramatic impact on a participant's score in a contest. Just as competing in cross country skiing, speed skating, or any other sport with gear used 40 years ago compared to today's equipment.

WRTC 2014 has gone to extremes to insure that all of the 59 stations are on a level playing field. All of the stations have the exact same antenna systems installed exactly the same way. The WRTC2014 committee employed terrain modeling software to select station locations and the reverse beacon network to ensure that the various locations selected are equal. I can tell you that during the past two years of operating test stations that every hour we were required to point the tribander in certain direction, on a certain band calling CQ on CW. Several of the reverse beacon network's Software Defined Receivers were running special software that would record the call signs of the test stations and signal level. The result was millions of data points collected over the two test contests which were analyzed and confirmed that the terrain modeling was accurate. A couple of sites used in the two years of testing will not be used in the actual event.

There will be 59 two person teams plus a couple of sponsored teams. For the actual competition there will be 65 stations built so there are a few spares. So that is a lot of equipment that has to be purchased, stored, and disposed of after the event. A few fast facts: there are over 5 miles of coax cable required, 65 forty foot towers which is 2600 feet of tower, 65 rotors, 65 2KW generators, 65 triband antennas, 65 tents, ETC. Basically this is 65 complete field day sites.

So you might be wondering who pays for all this? Well the WRTC 2014 committee is made up of volunteers. They have organized the events, selected the antenna systems, selected sites, and negotiated with site land owners, solicited donations, and sponsorships. Also after the competition this summer this equipment becomes unneeded so the Committee is selling off the complete stations. These stations are perfect for a clubs field day operation and at a very reasonable price. Most have already been sold.

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NJ1F WRTC Test Station July

Both years the test station I have operated, employed a "triplexer" and band pass filters which allowed both stations to share the tribander and operate at the same time with minimal inter-station interference. The Triplexer allows for a single triband antenna to be shared by up to three stations. I have the triplexer and filters mounted on a board which is between the two stations. This simple arrangement allows the operators to move the coax from their station to an unoccupied band and ensured both station were never on the same band. Other competitors used automated switching arrangements.



The tower and antenna system is very well thought-out and designed. The tower is erected by use of a "Falling Derrick" system. The advantage of this system is that no one has to climb any tower and all assembly is done on the ground. The entire tower and antenna system is simply winched to vertical and winched back down at the end of the weekend.

Ed WA1ZAM operating Station 2

You can become involved in WRTC 2014 by volunteering to be on a Beam team, Site team, Driver, Greeter at the Airport, or interpreter if you know a second language. This is a great way to meet fellow Hams and their families from around the world. Maybe one you have worked several times and exchanged qsl cards with. More information on the WRTC 2014 is available at www.wrtc2014.org. Another way to participate is to get on the air and work the stations during the upcoming IARU contest.



Brian Szewczyk
NJ1F

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Falling Derrick and Tower assembly

UPCOMING PUBLIC SERVICE

Saturday May 17th - Radio Merit Badge at the Boy Scouts Spring Camporee - Boyhaven Scout Camp 8:30 am - 4:00 pm

Sunday May 25th - Lion's Club Duathlon 7:00 am at the Saratoga Casino and Raceway - Jim K2LM for details

Sunday June 1st - Tour de Cure 7:00 am at the Saratoga Springs High School - Lee WB2NSC for details

Sat-Sun June 28th & 29th - Field Day at Wilton EMS

Saturday September 13th - Rosie's Walk 8:00 at the Galway High School

Sunday September 14th - Cystic Fibrosis Bike Event at the Saratoga Train Station

Sunday October 19th - Tow Path Duathlon - Town of Halfmoon - Fred W2EMS for details



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Got News or information you would like to get published? How about your own projects or other things you think would be of interest to Club Members? How about (GASP), a letter to the editor? Contact us at our email address :

SparksFromTheSpa@gmail.com

Upcoming program note

May 12 meeting. Speaker will be Dave Galletly talking about MESH.

June 9 meeting, Club Elections, Emergency communications, and Field Day.

(programs subject to change)