

Sparks from the Spa



A PUBLICATION OF SARATOGA COUNTY AMATEUR RADIO ASSOCIATION

March Swapfest

We held our annual March Swapfest on Saturday March 9. A good time was had by all. It was a great turnout, and everyone had a good time meeting friends for eyeball QSO's and seeing what stuff others were selling and that they personally "needed" for their shack.

Our door prize of an end fed antenna, EFHW 10-80 from My-Antenna.com was Gabby, KD2GAB. Congratulations to her. Our swapfest next year will be the second Saturday in March, March 14, 2020. Don't forget, we will be having the BIG show, our 33rd hamfest this Sept 8, 2019 at the Saratoga County Fairgrounds.

After the swapfest was done, and the crowd left, we held a test session for upgrading and new ham licenses. It was not as heavily attended as was some of our previous sessions, but we still had some good results. There now 4 new Technician, and 2 new General Class licensees. Congratulations to KD2RPY, KD2RPZ, KD2RQA, KD2RQB, KJ7EVI, and KD2RFE.

First rate service was provided by all the examiners, (in no particular order) KA2QYE, K2ZIP, KD2BVA, KA5VVI, K2JQ, K2LM, KD2IHO, KC1NN, N2VU and KG2H. Thank you, we could not hold these exams without you.



Board of Directors action Jim K2LM

Most years in early spring, the board of directors considers an individual, such as WA1ZMS, or a group, such as K1FFK, that could use our financial support for the long-term maintenance of their repeaters.

This year we are making an emergency donation of \$650 to replace a badly damaged antenna on the 146.94 MHz repeater. This repeater was built by The Telephone Pioneers in 1962 and housed at the New York Telephone IMTS site on Bald Mountain, northeast of Troy. IMTS was a VHF radio-telephone system where mobile stations could make telephone calls.

The Telephone Pioneers are gone, the IMTS system has been shut down for years, but the 94 repeater is still on the air at the site and getting a lot of use.

Bob, N2LUD, pays National Grid to keep it on the air, but there is no other individual or group to keep this historic repeater working.

If you would like to donate to help replace the 94 repeater antenna, please send Jim, KG2H whatever you think is appropriate to offset the expense of repairing the .94 repeater.

Thank you for helping us keep 94 on the air,

The History of the 146.940 MHz Repeater As told by Dave, W2GBO

In 1962 The Telephone Pioneers asked the help of GE Mobile Radio in Lynchburg, VA to put a VHF repeater on the air outside Troy. GE donated the equipment and the repeater using the callsign WB2NNZ, a secondary call held by Mac, W2LWX, went on the air at the New York Telephone IMTS (1) site on Bald Mountain, which is northeast of Troy at N 42.7821291 W -73.6293442.

Over the years, New York Telephone went through several revisions and The Telephone Pioneers disappeared. The repeater's call changed from WB2NNZ to W2LWX. When Mac became ill, Dave who had been doing the upgrades and maintenance on the repeater plus adding a UHF repeater, put his callsign, WA2GBO now W2GBO on it.

The original repeater, which received on 146.340 MHz and transmitted on 146.940 MHz, was housed in two watertight outdoor cabinets with one antenna for transmit and another for receive mounted on a telephone pole above the cabinets.

In 1962 the FCC did not have rules for repeaters, so the Bald Mountain repeater was considered a remote base. Nor did it have an identifier, so when you used it you had to say something like "this is WA2UMX via the WB2NNZ repeater".

About the same time the Schenectady club put a repeater on the air. There is no present information about which repeater was first, but the general viewpoint is that the Telephone Pioneers repeater was first. Schenectady's received on 146.46 MHz and transmitted on 146.940 MHz. Because hams on two meters normally used horizontal polarization for their antennas, the Schenectady repeater originally had horizontal Big Wheel antennas. The Telephone Pioneers was vertically polarized.

Note that both repeaters transmitted on 146.940 MHz but received on two different frequencies. This allowed a ham in downtown Troy to hear an operator in downtown Schenectady. Another reason was that the surplus all-tube radios had a receiver strip with one receive channel and the transmit strip would have room for two transmit crystals. Lastly, the receivers of the day were not broad banded and only had decent receive sensitivity on one frequency.

At present the 94 repeater, which has been on the air for 57 years, has no club or group that sponsors it. Bob, N2LUD, has an agreement with the building's owner to allow 94 to stay there plus he pays the National Grid bill to keep it on the air.



New Plan Aligns ARES with the Needs of Served Agencies

ARRL Newsletter 2/19/2019

The new **ARES Plan** adopted by the ARRL Board of Directors at its Annual Meeting in January represents an effort to provide ARES with a clearly defined mission, goals, and objectives; specific training requirements, and a system for consistent reporting and record-keeping. The Board's Public Service Enhancement Working Group (PSEWG) spent more than 3 years crafting the ARES Plan which, ARRL officials believe, provides a much-needed update of the program's role in public service and emergency preparedness in the 21st century. Concerns focused on bringing ARES into alignment with the National Incident Management System (NIMS) and Incident Command System (ICS), and creating more consistent and standardized ARES training requirements. Given dramatic changes and upgrades in national, regional, and local emergency and disaster response organizations, ARRL faced a major challenge, said ARRL Great Lakes Division Director Dale Williams, WA8EFK, who chaired the PSEWG.

"If we didn't address these issues, such as training standards and organizational management, ARES faced the very real possibility that it would no longer be viewed as a valid and valuable partner in emergency and disaster relief situations," Williams said.

With input from ARES members and a peer review team, and the assistance of emergency response officials with some partner organizations, the PSEWG came up with a plan that provides guidelines to ensure that ARES remains a service of organized, trained, qualified, and credentialed Amateur Radio volunteers who can provide public service partners with radio communication expertise, capability, and capacity, Williams added.

A drafted ARES Plan was circulated among ARRL Section Managers (SMs) and Section Emergency Coordinators (ECs) to gather feedback. During the comment period from August through October 2018, the PSEWG heard from 55 ARRL Sections, representing 40 states — more than 125 pages of feedback in all. The PSEWG expressed appreciation to all who submitted comments and ideas.

The PSEWG reviewed every comment and suggestion, identifying about a dozen key items commonly cited by those in the Field Organization to improve the plan.

Based on input from ARES participants, the training requirements in the final ARES Plan consist of the free FEMA Professional Development Series. The series comprises these independent study (IS) courses: 120.c, 230.d, 235.c, 240.d, 241.b, 242.b, and 244.b (as they may be amended), as well as the ARRL's EC-001 and EC-016 emergency communication courses. As part of adopting the ARES Plan, the ARRL Board approved a proposal to make the ARRL EC courses free for ARES members.

The plan highlights some additional training programs that ARES participants are encouraged to consider taking, but that are not required, such as AUXCOMM and training courses like ICS-300 and ICS-400.

The ARES Plan outlines a three-tiered membership structure based on increased responsibility levels and accompanying training requirements. Although the tiers are not a required path, they serve to define three distinct ways to participate in the ARES program; it's up to the participant to determine his or her level of involvement.

The ARES Plan points out that public service events such as parades and marathons are within the realm of ARES activity and are, in fact, a key part of it, because such events are an integral part of effective training.

In recognizing the local and regional nature of emergency communication needs in disaster response activations, the Plan notes that training requirements are ultimately the responsibility of the Section Manager, with each SM approving training for local ARES teams, as local conditions and needs dictate.

The ARES Plan also highlights the relationship between ARES and the National Traffic System (NTS). The PSEWG indicated that it will continue moving forward with efforts to find ways to refine and strengthen that relationship.

While the intent of the ARES Plan is to align the ARES organizational structure with the NIMS and ICS systems, Williams noted that, within the ARES structure, the Emergency Coordinator (EC) will continue to lead the ARES team locally during an incident, while the District and Section Emergency Coordinators will continue to serve as resources and support for the EC. (The emergency preparedness staff at ARRL is in the process of updating the EC manual.) The ARES Plan stresses that ARES participants are not first responders, and it encourages ARES leaders to develop and grow their group's partnerships with state emergency management agencies and officials. Williams said the adoption of the ARES Plan is not the end of this process.

"ARES cannot remain stagnant only to be updated once every few generations," he said. "The ARES Plan, and the ARES program, must be able to evolve." Williams added that the ARRL Headquarters emergency preparedness staff will review the program annually to ensure its continued relevance.

"So Now What?"

For those just getting started on their Amateur Radio journey, ARRL is launching a new podcast aimed at answering your questions, providing support and encouragement for newcomers to get the most out of the hobby. The podcast "So Now What?" will launch on Thursday,

March 7, and new episodes will be posted every other Thursday, alternating new-episode weeks with the "ARRL The Doctor is In" podcast.

Co-hosting "So Now What?" will be ARRL Communications Content Producer Michelle Patnode, W3MVP, and ARRL Station Manager Joe Carcia, NJ1Q. Presented as a lively conversation, with Patnode representing newer hams and Carcia the veteran operators, the podcast will explore questions that newer hams may have and the issues that keep participants from staying active in the hobby. Some episodes will feature guests to answer questions on specific topic areas.

"No other podcast is really aimed at this segment of the Amateur Radio community... that is being underserved, that is not getting the answers to the many questions they have," said ARRL Communications Manager David Isgur, N1RSN, who will serve as the podcast's executive producer.

Topics to be discussed in the first several episodes include getting started, operating modes available to Technician licensees, VEC and licensing issues, sunspots and propagation, mobile operating, contesting, Amateur Radio in pop culture, and perceptions of Technician license holders.

Given the growing popularity of podcasts, Isgur believes that providing this information in a podcast format will be a very effective method of reaching out and engaging this particular part of the Amateur Radio community, which is important for building and maintaining Amateur Radio interest and activity.

Patnode said she is excited to ask questions she has about different aspects of Amateur Radio, such as how to incorporate ham radio with newer technologies like Raspberry Pi computers and Arduinos, and to learn more about the hobby right along with the audience.

Carcia believes the "So Now What?" podcast will be a perfect complement to the podcasts that the ARRL already offers — "ARRL The Doctor Is In" and "ARRL Audio News."

In addition to serving as co-host, Patnode is also the audio editor/producer of the podcast. ARRL Graphics Department Supervisor Sue Fagan, KB1OKW, designed the podcast logo, and ARRL Radio-sport Administrative Manager Sarina Jackson, KC1JMW, will voice the introduction and closing.

Listeners will be able to find the "So Now What?" podcast on Apple iTunes, Blubrry, or Stitcher (free registration required, or browse the site as a guest) and through the free Stitcher app for iOS, Kindle, or Android devices...or wherever you get your podcasts. Episodes will also be archived on the ARRL website.

"So Now What?" will be sponsored by LDG Electronics, a family owned and operated business with laboratories in southern Maryland that offers a wide array of antenna tuners and other Amateur Radio products.



Job Opening for the County Fair

The other day, we became aware that the County fair is looking for a communicator for the duration of the Fair, July 23 to 28 this year.

They have a type of net control position they need filled. It is not a ham radio net, and you would not be working as a ham, but as a paid employee of the fair committee. As explained to us, they run a network during the fair, and each department is one spoke of the wheel. They do not allow the departments to interact with each other, in order to limit confusion and chaos.

As explained to us an example would be if the ride people needed an electrician, they would call into the net on one frequency. The net control would then call the electrician group on another frequency and ask them to report to the appropriate location.

They run 2 shifts a day 8 to 3 and 3 to 11. They are specifically looking to fill the first shift now. If you are interested please call Kevin Veitch, the General Manager at 518-885-9701 and chat with him about it.

Its just for the 6 days of the duration of the fair, so it could be nice distraction.

If you're interested, contact Kevin Veitch, General Manager 518-885-9701

June Elections jim KG2H

Hello, what can you do to help the club? Well consider this.

This June is our annual meeting. This is when we hold elections for the 4 officers, President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer. Additionally, there are 4 at large board members. We need you to consider running for some office.

New blood equals new ideas, and we need that. Consider running. If you are intrigued, please feel free to contact me (kg2h@arrl.net) if you wish to discuss the possibilities. Let me assure you that no present official will be offended if we offer a little competition for any of the seats. I know for a fact the some would enjoy some time off from active duty.

At the June meeting I will be offering a the slate of candidates of which I am aware, but any floor nominations can be entered into the elections. The club really does need your ideas and guidance. Thank you for considering this.

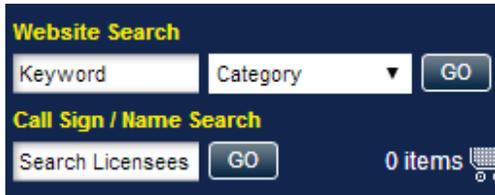
Membership Renewal Jim KG2H

Member Renewals - March 2019

Thanks to: AK2E, K1RQ, KA2FBZ, KA5VVI, KB2ZSN, KC2TVJ, KC2YLM, KD2DXQ, KD2IHO, KD2PEM, KD2PZY, N2IPS, N2MC, N2QFT, N2SBC, NJ1F, W2ALL, WB2NLE, WB2NSC

New members KD2PZY, KD2REF

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 your call sign in the search box on their home page. You do not need to be a member of ARRL to use this service.



K2DLL repeater system:

Corinth NY
147.000 MHz +600KHz 91.5 Hz CTCSS encode/decode
448.225 MHz -5.00 MHz 91.5 CTCSS encode/decode

Providence NY
147.240 MHz +600 Hz 91.5 Hz CTCSS encode/decode.
147.360 MHz +600 Hz (add 91.5 Hz CTCSS to connect to the NYS Network

Sacandaga Reservoir
147.03 MHz +600 KHz 91.5 Hz CTCSS encode/decode

Middleburgh NY
448.925 PL 107.2 WA2TTP-R Steve's Repeater is linked to ours via UHF



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Please be sure to visit our webpage for any late breaking news or newsletter archives.

WWW.K2DLL.ORG

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

We are looking for input from the membership as to what YOU would like to hear. Program suggestions are always welcome. Please let any of the Board Members know of you ideas.

Thanks