

Sparks from the Spa



A PUBLICATION OF SARATOGA COUNTY AMATEUR RADIO ASSOCIATION



November 11, 2019 meeting.

The entire meeting was dominated by the hamfest committee seeking membership guidance for next year's hamfest. Former Hamfest Chairman Peter Miller W2BEW, indicated to the committee that the fairgrounds has several open dates available in 2020 which may be more attractive than our regular Sunday after Labor Day date. There were several dates available in June and August.

Discussion seemed to be favoring the weekend of August 15-16, with a leaning towards Saturday Aug 15 date. The full committee will consider the input, and re-confirm date availability.

December 2019 Meeting

Apparently the Fire Training Center is still being used as a Code Blue shelter, so our meeting will be held in the EOC in Ballston Spa. This is the same location we used last month. It is in Ballston Spa, It is on the opposite side the street from the Co-operative Extension building at 50 West High Street (AKA Route 67). If you need directions, just give a shout out on one of our repeaters, and you will be talked in.

There is no planned speaker, but this is our normal holiday get together. Plan on a good eyeball meeting and conversation. If you wish you may bring some goodies along to share with the others.

Boy Scouts Report Increased JOTA 2019 Station Participation

12/03/2019

The Boy Scouts of America **report** that, although overall JOTA 2019 participation was down slightly from 2018, "our calculations show that each station averaged an additional 13 people in attendance over 2019. This shows an aggregate increase of 24% attendance per station, even with our reported stations being down from 266 in 2018 to 201 in 2019."

The Scouts reported that 13,783 individuals took part in JOTA 2019, down from 14,708 in 2018.

FCC Invites Comments on Digital AM Broadcasting Proposal

11/26/2019

The FCC has invited comments on a *Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM)*, that would allow AM broadcasters to transmit an all-digital signal using the HD Radio in-band on-channel (IBOC) mode, known as MA3.1

"We tentatively conclude that a voluntary transition to all-digital broadcasting has the potential to benefit AM stations and provide improved AM service to the listening public," the FCC said. "We seek comments on proposed operating standards for all-digital stations and the impact of such operations on existing analog stations and listeners."

The proceeding was initiated by a March 2019 *Petition for Rulemaking* (Petition) filed by Bryan Broadcasting Corporation. "This proceeding continues the Commission's efforts to improve and update the AM radio service to provide a better listening experience for consumers and enhanced service offerings, as part of our continuing effort to revitalize AM broadcasting," the FCC said in the introduction to the NPRM. Comments are due 60 days after the *NPRM* appears in *The Federal Register*.

ARRL Events App Will Support Orlando Hamcation Attendees

11/26/2019

Orlando HamCation® 2020 visitors in February will be able to navigate the convention with ARRL's free mobile event app, *ARRL Events*. First introduced for the **Dayton Hamvention**® in May 2019, the app received extremely positive reviews from users. ARRL has partnered with Orlando HamCation and Dayton Hamvention to re-introduce the app for these 2020 events.

"The user-friendly event app will help convention-goers find exhibits and forums, follow prize drawings, and connect with other attendees," said ARRL Convention and Event Coordinator Eric Casey, KC2ERC, who has been working with Orlando HamCation Committee members to help ready the app for the 2020 event. "Users will also enjoy notification of important program updates."

The free *ARRL Events* app will be available in late December for both Apple iOS and Android devices. A web-browser version, optimized for nearly any browser or other mobile device type, will also be available. Orlando Hamcation 2020 takes place February 7 – 9 and has been sanctioned as the 2020 ARRL Northern Florida Section Convention. Hosted annually by the Orlando Amateur Radio Club, HamCation is one of the largest annual amateur radio gatherings in the US.

Visit the HamCation website to purchase tickets.

President Rick Roderick, K5UR, Heads ARRL Group on FCC Visits

11/26/2019

President Rick Roderick, K5UR, and members of the ARRL Board's Executive Committee undertook a round of visits to FCC Headquarters in Washington on November 4 and 5. Topics focused on a number of pressing amateur radio-related issues. In addition to Roderick, members of the ARRL contingent included Atlantic Division Director Tom Abernethy, W3TOM; New England Division Director Fred Hopengarten, K1VR; Roanoke Division Director Bud Hippisley, W2RU; West Gulf Division Director John Robert Stratton, N5AUS, and ARRL Washington Counsel David Siddall, K3ZJ.

Digital Data Symbol Rate Proceeding

The ARRL delegation emphasized the overwhelming support for and need to remove symbol rate limits from the amateur rules, contending that the limits are outdated, no longer serve their original purpose of limiting signal bandwidth, and inhibit experimentation and development of digital communications techniques. Removing these limitations would also allow US radio amateurs to join those in other countries using methods not permitted in the US. This includes some techniques promoted by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) for emergency communication in the Caribbean.

In 2016, the FCC had responded to ARRL's petition for rulemaking (RM-11708) by proposing no bandwidth limit. During this month's visit to the FCC, ARRL reiterated that adopting a 2.8 kHz maximum bandwidth in place of the symbol rate limit would promote sharing and experimentation below 30 MHz.

The ARRL representatives also discussed issues that some have raised — and on which the FCC did not request comment — alleging that certain types of digital signals are “encrypted” because they are digitally compressed or otherwise can be difficult to receive over the air. The ARRL group pointed out that the FCC addressed the use of new digital techniques in 1995 and amended its rules to specifically authorize radio amateurs to use new digital techniques without prior Commission approval, as long as these techniques were publicly documented consistent with the documentation of the three techniques specifically approved at the time. Since then, multiple digital methods have been developed and deployed on the amateur bands without substantive complaints of insufficient documentation.

Regarding the specific digital techniques that have been the focus of complaints, several radio amateurs have reported to the FCC their success in using the public documentation to decode the signals. In addition, recently available free software, used with a Raspberry Pi, allows real-time monitoring of the same modes on which complaints have centered. The ARRL representatives concluded that the signals cannot be considered encrypted if they are readily decodable.

Some discussion touched on international regulations, because the prohibition on encryption is a provision of the ITU *Radio Regulations* and apply worldwide. The FCC regulation prohibiting “messages encoded for the purpose of obscuring their meaning” comes directly from the ITU *Radio Regulations*. This language was adopted at World Radiocommunication Conference 2003 (WRC-03) to replace a provision that limited amateur communications to “plain language.” Adoption of this change made clear that amateur communications encoded for digital transmission are authorized internationally as long as they're not encrypted. It was noted that techniques some commenters have targeted are widely used by amateurs around the world.

The ARRL delegation emphasized the importance of the discussion in terms of the future of amateur radio. As noted in its September 2019 *ex parte* filing, the digital revolution in communications technology requires new and different regulation to keep up with the fast-paced and almost constant change. Outside of the symbol rate limit, the FCC addressed these issues decades ago in the Amateur Service rules, and the ITU did so as well in 2003.

The work of the ARRL Band Planning Committee was also discussed. The FCC is aware that subsequent recommendations will be forthcoming once the Committee completes its study. ARRL maintained that regulation should continue to encourage amateur radio's ability to foster innovation through experimentation with new techniques while ensuring that encryption is not used beyond that explicitly authorized — such as the limited exception for satellite control.

60-Meter Band Allocation

ARRL petitioned the FCC in [RM-11785](#) to implement provisions adopted at WRC-15 that provide for a secondary amateur allocation at 5351.5 – 5366.5 kHz. ARRL also proposed that 100 W ERP be permitted on the new band, consistent with that authorized for the current five channels at 60 meters.

Referencing a National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) letter proposing to delete the existing four channels and substitute a secondary band allocation at a maximum permitted power of 15 W EIRP (9.1 W ERP), as approved at WRC-15, the ARRL delegation expressed concern that adoption of NTIA's proposal would require relocation of existing channelized amateur activity to a 15 kHz band at a fraction of the power now authorized, despite an absence of any reported interference on the current channels. ARRL also expressed concern that 9.1 W ERP would hamper emergency communication on the band, especially during hurricane season, when noise levels are usually high.

The FCC is expected to issue a *Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM)* in December or early next year addressing 60 meters and inviting comments.

Amateur Radio Enforcement

ARRL Executive Committee members met with FCC Enforcement Bureau Chief Rosemary Harold and her senior staff to discuss amateur enforcement. The delegation updated progress in setting up the Volunteer Monitoring Program pursuant to the FCC/ARRL *Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)* signed last March. The program is in the final stages of training volunteers and is expected to be brought online in early 2020. It is hoped that this program will result in better, more timely enforcement as well as provide a path to correct inadvertent minor infractions on an informal amateur-to-amateur basis more in line with amateur radio's long tradition of self-enforcement.

ARRL and FCC officials also discussed the problem of uncertified radios being imported into the US and the possible impact for radio amateurs of an FCC [Enforcement Advisory](#) issued in September 2018.

ARRL officials came away with a better understanding of the FCC's actions in this matter and of the dangers that uncertified radios capable of transmitting on unapproved spectrum pose to the integrity of commercial and public safety communication. The Amateur Service was not a focus of concern, and ARRL is considering future action.

RF Exposure Regulation

During their FCC visits, the ARRL team expressed concern with changes proposed in [ET Docket 13-84](#) to the Commission's RF exposure policies that would affect radio amateurs. Currently, amateurs are required to assess their installations if signals exceed levels set forth at Section 97.13(c) of the Commission's rules. It is ARRL's understanding that the draft *Report and Order* now under review at the FCC would eliminate the rule at 97.13(c)(1) that exempts amateurs from the routine evaluation requirements if the transmit power used is below certain levels.

Entry-Level Amateur License

The ARRL team requested prompt consideration of ARRL's "Technician Enhancement" petition, [RM-11828](#). ARRL pointed out that changes to the amateur entry-level license are needed to provide more meaningful opportunities to new licensees, particularly in the areas of digital technology and emergency preparation that are of continuing interest to new hams. Attempts to slow consideration of these proposals until unrelated issues are resolved are misplaced and contradict the public interest in attracting youth to exciting opportunities in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM), the ARRL group asserted.

80-Meter Band Realignment

The ARRL representatives also asked for consideration of its petition, [RM-11759](#), that seeks to update the sub-band divisions in the 80-meter band to make better use of the spectrum based on today's amateur use patterns and to provide more spectrum suitable for new and innovative experimentation.

Changes to Amplifier Gain Restriction

ARRL also reiterated its support for the proposal in [RM-11767](#) to repeal the 15 dB maximum amplification ratio for amateur radio amplifiers. The rule's original purpose of enforcing a prohibition on using amplifiers in the Citizens Band at 27 MHz is no longer needed because other FCC rules have proven effective in this regard. New technological means to eliminate misuse of amateur amplifiers, such as in the firmware that controls many of today's new amplifiers, is also available now, ARRL pointed out to the FCC officials.

The Toy Exchange December 2019

We have instituted a newsletter column "item for sale" column for club members who want to sell a piece of Ham Radio equipment they own.

This is for club members to sell personal items they own. It is not a forum for you to run a business. Send a description of the item which may or may not include a price. It is imperative for you to have a method for a potential buyer to contact you. The club and / or the newsletter WILL NOT be involved as a contact or negotiator, this is your responsibility.

If you send a picture of the item, the picture may or may not be published depending upon conditions of the picture, space in the newsletter, or other unspecified condition.

Send your copy to SparksFromTheSpa@gmail.com. Allow it to arrive at least 2 weeks before the scheduled club meeting. Your copy will be cut and pasted into the newsletter, no corrections will be edited, so check you spelling.

Ultimately the issue of the whether the item is published is subject to the discretion of the newsletter editor.

These rules are subject to change.

I recently splurged and bought myself a new Elecraft KX-3. Because of that, I need to reduce the surplus of QRP rigs in my collection. I am offering my Elecraft K2 and my Wilderness Radio Sierra.

The K2 is a 5 W (more on some bands) 160-10 rig. It is 8" wide X 3 1/4 tall by 8 1/4 deep. It has both CW and SSB modes, and is wired for a Kenwood 8 pin mic connector. I honestly only used it on CW and it worked great on that mode. I am not a SSB operator, but it does work with voice. It has built in antenna tuner for 2 antennas, and also a separate 160 receive antenna input, if you wish to use it there. In addition it has multiple bandwidth filters and a built in memory keyer. I would like \$300 for this radio.

The Sierra is a nominal 3 W CW rig, with plug in modules for 80, 40, 20 and 15m. It has a built in keyer, and variable bandwidth audio filter. I would like \$75 for this radio.

If you're interested, please contact me at KG2H@ARRL.net with your phone number. Thanks



Vintage Test Equipment

Heathkit, B&K, Fluke test equipment w/original manuals, tv/radio tubes, capacitors (Sprague, Bumble bee, etc), relays, resistors, antennas, SAMs photofacts, TEKFAQ, TV manuals.

Contact Steve 518-584-8554

We have a detailed list of model numbers for the equipment and other items.

Dues Time

Its that time of the year again. Our dues run on the calendar year. Many of you have already paid your 2020 dues, and I thank you. If you don't know when you're due you can contact me, KG2H@ARRL.NET and I will let you know. Your can always send me your dues anyhow, and if you are current, I will just add another year to your record, so don't let doubt dissuade you from sending your dues in. Thanks.

Saratoga County Amateur Radio Association Membership Information **Please Print CLEARLY**

Name _____

Callsign _____ License Class N T G A E

Email Address _____

Address _____

City State Zip _____

ARRL Member YES NO

Dues are \$10 per year, Payable to Saratoga County R.A.C.E.S.

You can mail your dues with this form to Jim Polewczak KG2H, 231 Northline Road, Ballston Spa 12020

Admin – Amt _____ Cash Check # # of years _____ Was Now



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



Officers

President
 Fred Brown W5BN
 W5BN@nycap.rr.com

Vice President:
 Peter Miller—W2BEW
 PETERMIL@verizon.net

Secretary:
 Jim McKnight K2LM
 K2LM@nycap.rr.com

Treasurer:
 Jim Polewczak—K62H
 K62H@arrl.net

Directors:

Dennis Kagel—WA2JWO
 KADELL@mybluelight.com

Mike Levy K2ZIP
 levymike@AOL.COM

Steve Rosenberg WA2TTP
 SROSENB2@nycap.rr.com

Brian Szewczyk—NJ1F
 Dave.Bargovic@gmail.com

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