

Sparks from the Spa



A PUBLICATION OF SARATOGA COUNTY AMATEUR RADIO ASSOCIATION

January Club meeting 01/11/2021

The meeting started with a short business meeting, followed by a general membership meeting.

Treasurer's report was given by KG2H

Membership status given by KG2H. As of end of December we had 74 members whose dues were paid thru the end of 2021 or further into the future. There were 26 members whose dues were paid thru December 2020. Additionally, there were 36 members currently on the list whose dues expired in 2019 or prior to that. Jim will prune the list sometime in March or April. Dues were still arriving in January, so things are looking up.

There was a discussion revolving around the monetary donation made last September to the Warren County group for repairs to the Gore Mountain antenna

Jim KG2H, asked to be relieved of the newsletter editor responsibilities. He has been doing it for 9 years, and he would like to move on from that responsibility. He volunteered to stay on in the capacity of mailing them out to the membership since he maintains the membership mailing list as Treasurer. Bill KD2QOJ, expressed an interest, and he and Jim will discuss what is entailed.

There was a great deal of discussion concerning our first virtual hamfest scheduled for January 23. Plans are well defined and a final meeting of the committee will be held on Jan 18.

The physical March swapfest has been cancelled because of the COVID pandemic. Discussion of whether to hold a virtual swapfest in March will occur after we get some experience with the virtual hamfest.

Our Feb 8th meeting

Our February presenter will be Dave Robbins K1TTT speaking about how he transformed his station into a remote powerhouse. He grows a variety of [towers and antennas](#), to feed the stations in his [Shack](#).

He presently has 4 towers (5 if you count the one with the 2m/70cm vertical and wx station) ranging from 120' to 180' tall. There are 7 operating positions with radios, amplifiers, computers, and all that other stuff that is needed to keep a station running.

As an added bonus we will be giving away a \$25 ARRL gift certificate at this meeting.

Our first virtual hamfest

January 23, 2021 - a date that will live in SCARA's history. A stalwart group of members got together and decided that since we were unable to have our normal live hamfest last September, we had to get the bitter disappointment out of our spirit and have a gala to boost everyone's spirits. Thus was born the first annual SCARA virtual hamfest. This was a no entry fee event, with the production and hosting costs borne by the club.

This was a total experiment to see if we could get our technology together in order to hold a wide-ranging gathering of hams. We had many speakers, a virtual swapfest and door prizes to hand out. There were 283 people who registered for the event. That was not bad for a first try. Each of the 5 speakers had about 125 to 135 hams in attendance. Several vendors also donated door prizes to be awarded. Mike K2ZIP reports that he even received an email from a Japanese ham concerning the event.

We would like to hear from you your thoughts on how it went, and also if you have any thoughts of the things you liked and any improvements we might make. Please send them along to Mike K2ZIP. His email address is on the last page of the newsletter.

Also keep the date Jan 22, 2022 open on your calendar. We are going to do this again and hope for a bigger and better event. In addition we still hope to get our regular live hamfest back in action this September.

This is crazy !! Jim KG2H

I ran across this picture on the QRZ web page for WW1WW. I cringed just looking at this. Supposedly he is at 190 feet fixing an 80 meter beam.

Please don't do this!! We need to keep all the members we have alive and healthy.



N2WDY SK

I hate to be the bearer of sad news, but, Bob Hoefinger N2WDY has become a silent key. He passed away yesterday (Sunday Jan 24). He had been hospitalized with Covid and I believe it was complications from that. I have not talked with the family yet.

Jo/N2QFT

Dayton Hamvention Cancels 2021 Show via ARRL

Dayton Hamvention® has been canceled for the second year.

"Unfortunately, several setbacks in the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic make necessary the difficult decision to cancel Hamvention 2021," a January 11 announcement from the Hamvention Executive Committee said. Sponsored by the Dayton Amateur Radio Association (DARA), Hamvention was set to take place May 21 - 23 in Xenia, Ohio.

"Hundreds of volunteers have been working to do everything necessary to bring this Hamvention to the many amateur radio enthusiasts and vendors who support the Dayton Hamvention," the committee continued. "Vaccine distribution both in the United States and around the world is lagging behind what was planned. In addition, the emergence of a more communicable form of the COVID-19 virus increases the potential for further public health problems in the next few months. We make this difficult decision for the safety of our guests and vendors." Tickets deferred last year will be deferred again until 2022.

The Hamvention Committee hinted at a QSO party for Hamvention weekend. In November, Hamvention had announced that "The Gathering" would be the theme for the 2021 show. Hamvention is the largest annual amateur radio gathering in the US, and was the host of the ARRL National Convention for its last event, held in 2019. The ARRL Hamfest and Convention Calendar includes a searchable database that includes other canceled in-person events

New FCC Commissioner

President Joseph Biden this week designated FCC Commissioner Jessica Rosenworcel as acting chair of the FCC. She succeeds, at least temporarily, former FCC chair Ajit Pai, who resigned effective on January 20.

"I am honored to be designated as the Acting Chairwoman of the Federal Communications Commission by President Biden," Rosenworcel said in a statement. "I thank the President for the opportunity to lead an agency with such a vital mission and talented staff. It is a privilege to serve the American people and work on their behalf to expand the reach of communications opportunity in the digital age."

Prior to joining the FCC, she served as Senior Communications Counsel for the United States Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation. Before entering public service, she practiced communications law in Washington, DC.

The newest FCC commissioner, Nathan Simington, a Republican appointee, said Rosenworcel "brings deep knowledge and experience and highly informed judgment to her new position," and he expressed appreciation that the Biden Administration acted promptly to establish FCC leadership by "selecting such a distinguished public servant for this vital role."

Fellow Democrat Geoffrey Starks said Rosenworcel "has been a passionate advocate for bringing the benefits of broadband to all Americans — particularly our children." He said her designation as acting chair "comes at a critical juncture for the Commission, as COVID-19 has made bold action to end internet inequality more vital than ever."

The Commission's other Democratic appointee, Brendan Carr, called Rosenworcel "a talented and dedicated public servant, as evidenced by her 8 years of distinguished service on the FCC."

On Twitter, Rosenworcel said, "The future belongs to the connected," and she described herself as an "impatient optimist, mom, wife, [and] inveterate coffee drinker."

W3KHG, Saturday at 2:39 PM

Slow Speed Contest Training Brian NJ1F

Brian NJ1F sent me some information to pass along to the gang. There is a slow speed contest training every month. You can go to the link <http://www.k1usn.com/sst.html> to get all the details, but here is a quick introduction.

- Suggested operating frequencies:
 - o 160 meters 1.810 - 1.825 MHz (new for 2021)
 - o 80 meters 3.528 - 3.545 MHz
 - o 40 meters 7.028 - 7.045 MHz
 - o 20 meters 14.028 - 14.045 MHz

Normal Date and Time:
00:00-01:00 UTC Mondays
which is: 19:00-20:00 EST Sundays
(this is 7-8pm Eastern Standard Time)

SST: **S**low **S**peed [**C**on]**T**est:
All about the **SST**

The [CWops Club](#) (CWops) promotes the art of CW for those who wish to expand and improve their on-the-air experiences. [CWops' CW Academy](#) (CWA) program has produced thousands of successful graduates who have gone on to become every day CW operators. Hundreds of CWA grads have become CWops members after demonstrating their ability to understand and communicate in CW at speeds of 25 WPM and higher!

CWops' three weekly 25 to 40+ WPM CWT sprints are exciting, stimulating and a great way to improve CW copying ability, operating skills, and propagation knowledge. The CWTs create bonds of friendship among CW-loving operators around the world.

For those just getting started in CW contesting and others who prefer a more leisurely pace, several members of both the K1USN radio Club and CWops have created a weekly one-hour slow speed CW contest, the SST. Please join us!

K1USN's Slow Speed Test is designed to encourage and assist those who signed up for CWA to learn CW or to improve their CW skills but are not yet copying 25 WPM, and all others who feel like "taking it slow and easy" once per week both for their own pleasure and to help others out. CWops currently offers a total of nine "slow speed" CWT's per year just after the three CWA graduations where all are encouraged to slow down to 20 WPM. Many CWA grads make contacts in those sessions, enjoying a well-earned rush of accomplishment. The SST will expand those opportunities for success to **52 weeks per year!**

All of us old enough to remember our Novice days recall the rush of adrenalin and the sweaty grip on our J-38 (or Radio Shack) keys during our first CW QSOs. This is what it must feel like for the new CW operators we want to encourage.

The weekly slow speed SST is also for operators who participate in regular CWT sessions, but only as S & P (Search and Pounce) entrants. The weekly 20 WPM or slower SSTs can build their confidence to find open frequencies and begin calling CQ, first in the SSTs and then in the more crowded and frenetic full speed CWTs. Successfully crossing that CQing threshold is another real accomplishment!

We hope many SST participants become sufficiently comfortable with CW contesting to enjoy the regular higher speed CWT sessions, other big CW contests, and smaller local and regional QSO parties, using N1MM+ (or other) computer loggers, spotting networks, call history files, live online scoring, etc. **But we welcome everybody to join in the SSTs** whether high speed CW contesting is your goal or not, including new ops making their first attempts at completing a CW QSO. In addition to SST's 20 WPM upper speed limit, we ask all to be patient, supportive, and willing to slow down further as necessary to assist another op in completing an SST QSO.

CWA recommends using electronic keyers and paddles, but if you are more comfortable with some other device, please feel free to join us in the SSTs using a straight key, cootie key, bug or paddles. Unlike high speed contests, where QSO rate is king and a CQing/"running" station expects only the required exchange and confirms a contact with simply "dit" or "R," the SST will encourage sending brief friendly greetings to the other Op. Friendliness is part of taking it slow and easy!

So please join us in the SSTs! All you need is an HF radio, an antenna, and the desire to become, and assist others to become, better CW operators!

For more info or questions about our SST, please email us at: k1usn.radioclub.sst@gmail.com

[WSJT-X 2.4.0 to Introduce New Digital Protocol Q65](#) via ARRL

WSJT-X version 2.4.0 will introduce a new digital protocol called Q65, which, according to the Quick Start Guide, is designed for "minimal two-way QSOs over especially difficult propagation paths." The Guide said, "On paths with Doppler spread more than a few hertz, the weak-signal performance of Q65 is the best among all WSJT-X modes. Q65 is particularly effective for tropospheric scatter, ionospheric scatter, and EME on VHF and higher bands, as well as other types of fast-fading signals."

The new protocol uses 65-tone frequency-shift keying and builds on the demonstrated weak-signal strengths of QRA64, introduced in 2016. User messages and sequencing are identical to those in FT4, FT8, FST4, and MSK144. Q65 employs a "unique tone" to sync time and frequency. "As with JT65, this 'sync tone' is readily visible on the waterfall spectral display," the Guide said.

"Unlike JT65, synchronization and decoding are effective even when meteor pings or other short signal enhancements are present. Transmit/receive sequence lengths of 15, 30, 60, 120, and 300 seconds are available. According to the Guide, "Q65 will enable stations with a modest Yagi and 100 W or more and to work one another on 6 meters at distances up to ~1,600 kilometers at most times, in dead-band conditions."

Dues are Due soon ! Jim Polewczak KG2H

With the new year starting, it's time for me to put on my Treasurer's hat. I just want to remind you we usually get a ton of membership renewals at the September Hamfest, but you know what happened this year. The membership runs with the calendar year, and with January 1 coming up, Ten Dollars is a real steal for the year's membership. If you want to send me payment for multiple years, I will be happy to accept any number of multiple years renewals. I just want to remind you to mail in your dues to me. Please use the form below, thanks. If you have any questions, please drop me an email at KG2H@ARRL.NET

I am happy to report that about 3/4 of the members have already renewed as of the end of December. I think that must be some kind of record !! Lets keep it up in January.

People have asked me about why the check should be made out to Saratoga County R.A.C.E.S. Well the simple answer is that the club's checking account has been around so long, it is still in the club's original name. The bank has given me a hassle about changing it on the account.

Thanks

K1RQ, K2ZIP, KA2TUC, KB2STR, KC2CLK, KD2MPZ, KD2ODA KD2QKU, KD2RQA, KF2ZR, KG5JEN, N2MBX, N2SSL, N2TOM, NJ1F, NR2T, W2MLB, W2PAS, WA2JWO, WB2NSC.

Also, we are happy to welcome Joe Coffin, KF2ZR. If you hear him on the repeaters, please say hi.

**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 _____

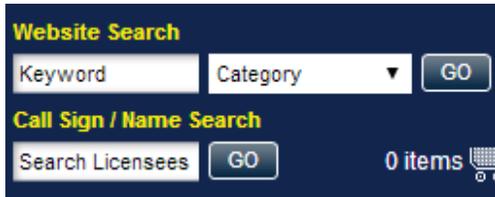
ARRL Member YES NO

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 use – 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 aka Fraker Mountain
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 :

K2DLL@OUTLOOK.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 your ideas.
Thanks