

Sparks from the Spa



A PUBLICATION OF SARATOGA COUNTY AMATEUR RADIO ASSOCIATION

What's Going On

April 1, 2023 - Our annual Swapfest and VE Test Session

We had to reschedule this from our original date because we lost our room schedule. Come to join us for our annual swapfest held at the County Cooperative Extension building at 50 West High Street in Ballston Spa. Doors will open about 7 AM, bring some of your prized possessions so that they can find a new home. We expect to have some coffee and donuts to gnash on while you catch up on some eyeball qso's. We will also run a 50 / 50 which will be drawn at approximately 10:30. At 11:00AM we have to close the swapfest down so that we can set up for the VE Session at Noon. We hope to see you all there.

April 10, 2023 - our regular monthly club meeting

Introduction to High Frequency radio. Are you a tech or general class licensee? You know you have privileges on HF, right? You should explore HF, but you're full of questions. Frequencies? Antennas? Radios? Propagation? Logging? We will have some experienced HF operators on hand to help you with some of your basic questions. We hope to encourage you to get on the air. Also we hope that you will attend field day this year to get some hands on experience.

We will be holding this meeting as a hybrid meeting, physically at the Fire Training session in Ballston Spa at 7:00 PM, and also on Zoom, for those of you who may find it difficult to come in person.

May 8, 2023 - We hope to schedule a speaker from ADA (American Diabetes Association)

Tour de Cure is back in the Saratoga region!! After being curtailed due to COVID, the ADA will again be bicycling a bunch of routes in the Saratoga area. The event will be held on June 4, with the Start / Finish at the Ellms Family Farm on Charlton Road. Our club has supported this since it's inception in this area. There are several routes from 10 miles to 100 miles. We provide communications to the rest areas, sag vehicles, bike repair people, and anywhere else the ADA wants us to be. We use our local voice repeaters and APRS to let us know the locations of the support vehicles. It's a fun event for us, but also hones our emergency communications skills

May 28, 2023—Lions Club Duathalon

We have provided communications for this event many years. Jim McKnight- K2LM is organizing this event. We need communicators. Contact Jim at K2LM@nycap.rr.com

Whats going on continued

June 4, 2023 - Tour de Cure.

See above, we need a large number of communications. Mike Levy—K2ZIP is organizing the hams. Please contact him to volunteer, LevyMike@aol.com If you would like to see the web page from ADA, use this link: [American Diabetes Association: 2023 Tour de Cure: Capital Region](#)

June 12, 2023 - Monthly Club Meeting

Topic TBD. Held at the Fire Training Center in Ballston Spa 7:00 PM

June 23, 24, and 25. - Field Day

We will be starting setup on Friday afternoon, continuing on Saturday morning. We are shooting a good attendance to keep the radios busy all 24 hours starting on air at 2:00 PM. We are not expecting to break into the top 10 in our category, our objective is to simply have a lot of club members come by and operate. Remember the April meeting agenda, Intro to HF radio? We want all you Techs and Generals to come out and get your hands on experience on Setup, Operaion, and Tear Down.

More information about Field Day will be forthcoming.

Board Meeting - April 8, 2023

A Board Meeting was held via Zoom on April 8. Various topics were discussed. The highlights are:

Treasurer's Report - Jim KG2H

Upcoming meeting topics were discussed.

Discussion on Field Day. How do we encourage members to attend and participate? We need a FD chairman to lead the effort. This does not need to be a member of the board. Anyone interested can contact any board member.

T-Shirts for Operators who participate? W5BN will look into pricing. What about ARRL's Field Day pins?

Food?

Other incentives? Getting Techs and Generals to participate. The GOTA (Get on the Air) station?

What is our goal for Field Day?

Tour de Cure

Discussed staffing. Need coverage for Sag Vehicle, Bike Repair, Rest Stops, Rovers. We're going to have APRS as much as possible because the various courses are widespread. Mike Levy is coordinating with the ADA people. He will also coordinate the hams.

Board meeting continued

Hamfest

Chairman Fred W2EMS is pleased with the progress achieved. Brian NJ1F has done a stellar job with coordination vendor contacts. We have some good commitments from vendors for door prizes and give aways.

NR2T will once again spend the evening at the hamfest site to watch over the grounds,

Bucket prizes and grand prizes were briefly discussed. Further discussion will take place after the Dayton Hamfest where we expect the major manufacturers will introduce new equipment

The fairground management has declared that there will be no overnight camping available in either the parking lots or fairgrounds.

Tee Shirts for hamfest workers?

Test session will be held on site this year rather than at the solar building. It should be more convenient for the examinees to attend the hamfest after the test session.

HAARP Thanks Amateur Radio Operators for Help with Latest Experiment via ARRL

On Tuesday, December 27, 2022, the High-frequency Active Auroral Research Program (HAARP) conducted its latest ionospheric experiment of bouncing radio signals off an asteroid passing near Earth's orbit (see the ARRL News story from December 23, 2022).

Amateur radio operators and radio astronomy enthusiasts were invited to monitor the test and send their results to HAARP for analysis. While the results of the experiment will take several weeks, Jessica Matthews, HAARP Program Manager, said the help was greatly appreciated. "So far we have received over 300 reception reports from the amateur radio and radio astronomy communities from six continents who confirmed the HAARP transmission."

HAARP officials say the results of the experiment could aid efforts to defend Earth from larger asteroids that could cause significant damage.

"We will be analyzing the data over the next few weeks and hope to publish the results in the coming months," said Mark Haynes, lead investigator on the project and a radar systems engineer at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in California. "This experiment was the first time an asteroid observation was attempted at such low frequencies," he said. "This shows the value of HAARP as a potential future research tool for the study of near-Earth objects."

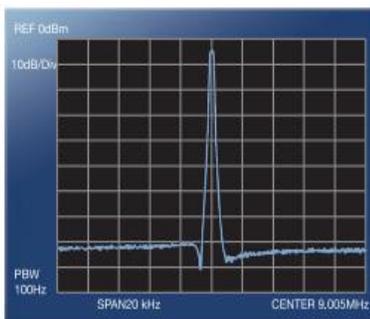
The University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF) operates HAARP under an agreement with the Air Force, which developed and owned HAARP but transferred the research instruments to UAF in August 2015.

CW Zero-Beat plus a few Tips and Tricks

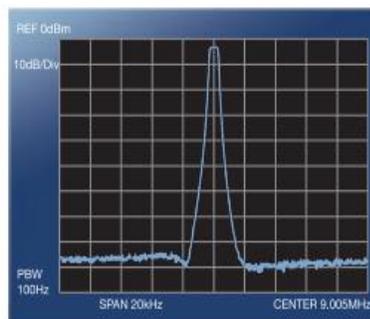
"Zero Beat" if you are a seasoned CW operator you know all about the term and are an expert, but some might not understand. Morse code "CW" is made up of dots and dashes which represent the characters. They are formed by turning a transmitter "Carrier" on and off at a specific rate and duration. When you tune in a CW signal on your receiver you will notice that the "Pitch" of the CW signal will change as you tune through it. "Zero Beat" basically means that you tune in the station until it matches your CW transmit pitch exactly. When they match perfectly there is no "Beat note".

Back in the day when the first transceivers came out this was important but close counted because of the receiver likely didn't have a CW filter or if it did it was likely 800 Hz or 500 Hz wide. Today with modern transceiver with DSP filters it is critical to zero beat. The reason that it is become more important is that the modern transceiver is usually equipped with narrower CW filters and DSP IF filtering to make it even tighter. Example the Elecraft K3s you can equip it with 500 Hz, 400 Hz or 200 Hz CW filters. So, when a calling station is tuned to a frequency outside of 200 Hz chances are not very good that it will be heard. Unless you are a very strong or close by. Further more turning the DSP filter to its narrowest setting of 20 hz means you really have got to be very close in frequency. This performance is very effective at allowing one to hear a weak DX signal next to a very strong one.

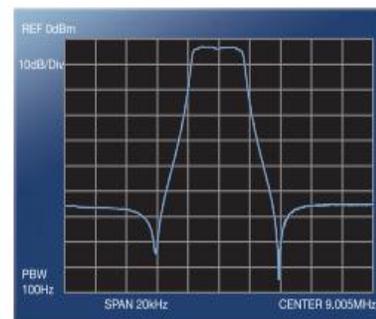
Below is a screen grab from the Yaesu FTDX-101MP brochure showing the performance of the filters.



300Hz Roofing Filter (9MHz, SPAN: 20kHz)



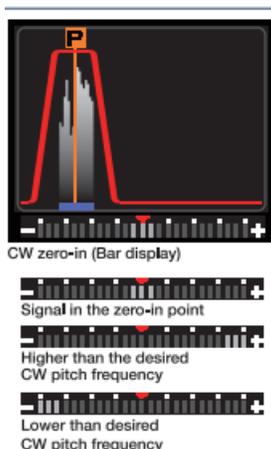
600Hz Roofing Filter (9MHz, SPAN: 20kHz)



3kHz Roofing Filter (9MHz, SPAN: 20kHz)

Zero Beat Continued

Most modern transceivers have a *CW* tuning indicator to aid the operator in quickly zero beating a station. The screen grab below is from the FTDX-101MP brochure which shows the zero-beat tuning indicator.



Hopefully you understand zero-beat and that employing it greatly increases the chances of being heard by a DX station. Well like rules in spelling and English there are a few exceptions where you might not want to be exactly zero-beat. I will highlight a couple of instances when not exactly tuning to zero-beat might be preferred.

The telnet / packet pile-up which happens when a rare station shows up and is spotted on the cluster. Since many of the *CW* spots on the cluster are generated from a computer program decoding the entire *CW* band from a SDR receiver. Also, the fact that many operators use a logging computer connected to the spotting cluster and to control their transceiver. All one has to do is simply "Click" on the spot and their radio is now set to the exact zero-beat frequency of the DX station. Guess what else happens? Well 10, 20 to 100 other stations did the exact same thing.

What the DX station hears is a solid tone while stations call. Yup a solid tone because the individual *CW* elements of the calling stations will not be synchronized. To help minimize this some of the spotting cluster sysops have added an offset to their systems *CW* spots which helped but it is still a problem. But there is something that you can do to help make your *CW* signal stand out.

Tip, to make your signal stand out in a Packet pileup use your rig's XIT button and knob. Engage XIT and tune it to either plus or minus 20 HZ which will offset your transmit frequency just enough to still be within the passband of the DX stations filter but stand out from the "tone".

I also use the XIT when I am calling a DX station that I tuned in without packet but has a small pileup or doesn't come back after a couple of calls. It is very effective.

Look forward to hearing you in the pile-ups!

Brian Szewczyk
NJ1F

ARRL Podcasts via ARRL

On the Air

Sponsored by [Icom](#)

In the latest episode of the ARRL [On the Air](#) podcast, Ginger Wilder, KI5TJE, discusses her first time running an amateur radio net. Get ready to be the next Net Control operator for your local net.

ARRL Audio News

Listen to [ARRL Audio News](#), available every Friday. ARRL Audio News is a summary of the week's top news stories in the world of amateur radio and ARRL, along with interviews and other features.

Thanks

NC2P

Saratoga County Amateur Radio Association - Membership Information
Please Print CLEARLY

Name _____

Callsign _____

Email Address _____

Address Line 1 _____

Address Line 2 _____

ARRL Member YES NO License Class N T G A E

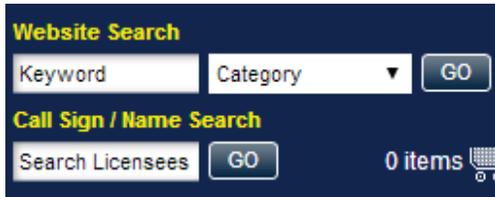
Amt _____ Cash or Check # # of years _____ Was Now

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



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



Officers and Board Members

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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

*Saratoga County Amateur Radio Association
presents our 37th annual*

HAMFEST 2023

Saturday, September 9th; Gates open at 7:00 am

Saratoga County Fair Grounds, 162 Prospect St, Ballston Spa, NY 12020

Only \$10 per person includes door prize drawing, plus 8'x 8' "tailgate" space



- NEW AND USED gear and accessories to haggle over
- KJI Electronics will offer the latest radios, books, etc.
- VE exam to be held at 8:30 am (on site this year!)
- Plenty of room to display your sale items
- Demonstrations: TBA
- Fox-hunt on the fairground property
- Under-cover tables available for \$10 each
- Delicious Food served all day

Directions:

- I-87 to Exit 12
- West on Rt 67 to Ballston Spa
- At intersection of Rts 50 & 67, follow 50 North; look for HAMFEST signs
- In village, turn left at Citgo station on Prospect Street; up hill on left

Talk-In

K2DLL Repeater System
147.000 or 147.240
PL = 91.5 Hz.
GPS Coordinates
43.007438 ° -73.855821 °

For Information or reservations contact: Jim Polewczak - KG2H
231 Northline Road, Ballston Spa, NY 12020. Email: kg2h@arl.net

SEE US AT www.K2DLL.ORG