



# Sparks from the Spa



A PUBLICATION OF SARATOGA COUNTY AMATEUR RADIO ASSOCIATION

## Ed Whitaker—K2DLL Now a Silent Key

Sadly, we learned this week that Edgar Whitaker, K2DLL, passed away on November 4. Ed was a founder and Life Member of Saratoga County RACES. Ed was instrumental in establishing our 2-meter repeaters, worked closely with county Civil Defense and served on the repeater frequency coordinating committee (UNIREPCO) for many years.



Ed was always an integral part of all club activities and continued to attend QCWA gatherings with his wife, Alice, K2SJH, in recent months.

Ed had suffered from Alzheimer's Disease but still managed to be heard on local 2-meter repeaters until recently.

We've all lost a good friend. Ham radio has lost a champion. Our deepest sympathy goes to Alice and to other family members.

A graveside service will be held at the Ballston Spa Cemetery at Ballston Ave. & Garrett Rd. on Friday, November 21 at 10 am. A memorial service will follow at 11 am at Ballston Center Presbyterian Church, Charlton Rd. at Middle Line Rd. Friends are welcome.

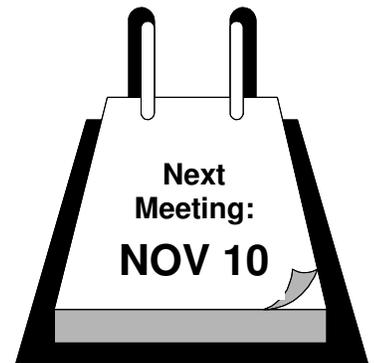
## President's Corner

(No President's Message this month)

## Board of Directors Meeting October 13, 2008

The board meeting was called to order at 6:32 by President Darlene Lake, N2XQG. Present were BoD members Peter – W2BEW, Byron – K2BD, Ed – AB2XA, Dennis – WA2JWO, and a number of club members.

- Darlene reported that there has been pressure from the fairgrounds to raise our rent for the HamFest from the \$375 we have paid for many years. We cannot afford the normal rate of \$1200, and would be forced to discontinue the fest. Now we may have reached an alternative arrangement with fairground management. The Fair needs radio operators during the annual event from July 14-19. They have a communications room with a base station, and many staff members carry HTs around the property. If we can provide a net control to staff the radio during evening hours for those 6 days, our rent will remain at the current level.
- The board endorsed this idea. We'll be looking for volunteer operators as the annual Fair approaches. There will be some minimal training needed. Please plan on pitching in.
- Dates for next year's events:  
Swapfest – March 14; HamFest – September 14.



## Board Meeting, cont.

There was no treasurer's report, since Al was absent.

Darlene reported that the net income from the HamFest was \$2086

- Jim – K2LM reported that the National Grid tower on Spruce Mountain is getting populated, but our antenna is not yet installed (update report elsewhere in this newsletter). Jim and Frank – KA2QYE responded to an urgent request from county emergency services coordinator, Paul Lent, to relocate the new fire control antenna higher on the tower, because it was not reaching parts of the county. They were already on-site and reshuffled their day to accommodate this critical need.
- Jim also described the plight of the NOBARC (Northern Berkshire) repeater group, that has recently been told by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts that they will now have to pay for power for their heavily used, long-range Mount Greylock repeaters. They cannot afford this expense with current membership support. Jim and Frank are working with them to procure four new, more-efficient power supplies that would drastically reduce power consumption. NOBARC is \$529 short, and Jim suggested that SCARA contribute that amount for purchase. After much discussion, including the suggestion that they also approach other area clubs, the board decided to contribute 50% of that amount -- \$265.00.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 pm.

## General Meeting

Twenty members attended the general meeting, which was convened at 7:32 pm.

- A yellow and black rain jacket was left at the September HamFest, as was a coffee mug. To claim either, contact Dar – N2XQG at dar@saratogaspringsny.us
- Jim – K2LM reported on the status of the club's repeater on Spruce Mountain, and indicated that help will be needed moving equipment from old to new sites some time soon. Signups were encouraged. (Jim's update follows in this newsletter.)
- Program ideas were discussed for upcoming meetings. Possibilities include antenna ideas, legal aspects, RFI, vintage radio, traffic handling, digital communications and the new hospital amateur radio network. Stay tuned.

- HamFest issues were discussed in some detail, in order to find ways to make it more inviting and interesting, and because Darlene will not be available on HamFest day in 2009.

Items reviewed included:

- Food – this was a big success. Directed by Dave – NR2J, with help from Byron – K2BD and a host of others, the operation was very efficient and brought in substantial revenue.
  - Vendors – We lost The Wire Man this year, but we picked up Quicksilver after an absence of several years. Darlene makes a mailing to 80 to 85 potential vendors each year. Give us your thoughts on new possible vendors to approach.
  - Table Rentals – This is handled by Darlene, and will need to transition to others (Al Margadonna?) for 2009.
  - Publicity – Darlene makes a mailing to many local and regional media outlets. Peter will assist with press releases to additional outlets.
  - Fox Hunt – This was run by Dennis – WA2JWO and Mike – KC2SWF and was a very successful first-time effort. Member suggestions for increasing participation are encouraged
  - Gate – Darlene will continue to schedule shifts; Al M will back up.
  - Programs & Tickets – Darlene will again get these printed in advance
  - ARRL involvement – Peter will investigate having an ARRL representative at the HamFest
  - Presentations (EmComm, etc) – Needs further discussion, but could increase interest. ARRL or other speaker.
  - Building attendance – Extend our reach, publicity, etc. Reach out to Canadian hams.
  - All other HamFest ideas and recommendations should be submitted to the board.
- Two public service events were on the schedule for October -- Mowhawk Towpath Duathlon and Burnt Hills Apple Run. Both have now occurred and were successful.
  - Meeting was adjourned at 8:40.

Submitted by Peter – W2BEW

## Report from the Top (of the Mountain)

We are slowly getting 147.00 into its new home on Spruce Mountain. I want to thank the 13 people who said they would help in the move. Though the move is about 80% complete, I still may call upon you.

I am certain we will see a decreased coverage of the repeater. When Frank, KA2QYE, was putting the new repeater antenna on the National Grid tower, I asked him to make certain that in positioning it we got a clear view of Glens Falls. "All I can see in that direction is trees," he replied.

So far, the move has taken two weekend days. I want to thank, KA2DTH, and Faith, who brought us lunch one day, K2BD, N2POR, KC2DOG, KC2SMB, K2RRT for their efforts in moving the repeater.

The 147.00 is now operating from the NG site with a loaner VHF repeater. At present there is no UHF repeater at the site and hence no linking. We will get the regular VHF and UHF repeaters at the site before we get closed out.

Next spring we will start to move the 147.24 repeater, Flexnet node and beacons to the new Providence tower.

Jim—K2LM

## Weekly Radio Net

Please join us on the air each Sunday evening at 7 PM for our weekly net. This regular gathering offers on-air practice in net operation in preparation for emergency situations. It also provides timely information to area amateurs, and serves as a forum for selling/swapping gear and discussing topics in a formally directed net environment.

The 147.00 and 147.24 repeaters are linked by the 448.225 MHz machine during this net, so feel free to check in on any of these repeaters. PL tone is 91.5 Hz.

We are looking for volunteer Net Control Stations for the Sunday evening net. It's easy. Just keep track of the check-ins and give everyone a chance to talk.

## Trading Post

*FREE TOWER with 4-element Beam.*

*You take down.*

*Call Earl St. Onge—W2ZQA; (518) 399-8339*

## News from ARRL

*Compiled from ARRL Letter and www.arrl.org*

### Solar Update

Solar Cycle 24 is slowly building momentum. We saw sunspots for eight days in a row -- October 10-17 -- then 12 days of no spots.

Another sunspot -- number 1007 -- appeared on October 30 from Solar Cycle 24. It is a high latitude sunspot and may provide some fun for the next few days.

### 2008 Field Day Results Posted

The results from this year's Field Day are now available online in the members-only section of [www.arrl.org](http://www.arrl.org) and will be in December QST. Field Day continues to be the most popular on-the-air event in Amateur Radio.

SCARA placed 88th nationally in category 3A with 1138 QSOs and 3622 points. We were in 4th place in that category in Eastern NY.

## Public Service Feedback

### Mohawk Towpath Duathlon —

Thank you all for a job well done. This was a record 106 participants plus another dozen youth.

- A couple of you have already suggested improvements:
- Kids race early and get parents out of there BEFORE the race starts.
  - Stricter control of parking
  - NO PARKING on Beach Road.
  - No entering the site (ie Beach Road) after race starts.
  - Volunteers return to a different check out location so not to add to traffic mayhem on Beach Road.
  - Have at least two volunteers at every location. One to do traffic control and one to do (shortwave or cell phone) communications.

If you have others please let me know.

Also when you get your calendar for next year mark down "DUATHLON" on October 18, 2009.

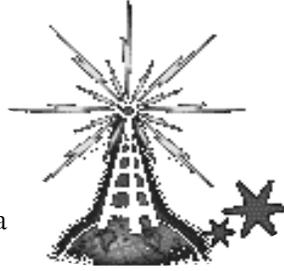
Eric J. Hamilton  
Clifton Park, NY 12065  
— via Fred, W2EMS



### WA2UMX ON THE INTERNET

The club has a website at:  
**<http://www.wa2umx.net>**.  
Here you will find the latest club news and events.

The club operates two 2-meter repeaters. The 147.24 repeater is located 15 miles west of Saratoga Springs at Lake Nancy. This repeater has a members-only phone patch. The 147.00 repeater is located 10 miles north of Saratoga Springs on Spruce Mountain, near Corinth, NY. This repeater offers an "emergency" phone patch. These two machines, in combination, offer excellent North to South and East to West communications far beyond Saratoga County. These repeaters are linked together at various times by the club's third repeater on 448.225 MHz.  
**PL Tone for all club repeaters is now 91.5 Hz.**



## OFFICERS

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