



Sparks from the Spa



A PUBLICATION OF SARATOGA COUNTY AMATEUR RADIO ASSOCIATION

May 2015 General Meeting

Our May meeting was a formal Skywarn training session for Basic Spotter Training, conducted by the National Weather Service. Hugh Johnson came to us to give us some basic information about severe weather possibilities in this local area, and also in general. Concentration was on summer type of weather, thunderstorms and tornados.

The meeting was very well attended with a mixture of both amateur radio operators from the area, as well as members of the general public. It was a 2 hour training class.



May 2015 Board of Directors Meeting (05-11-2015)

Jim McKnight gave us an update on the repeaters, and our situation at the .24 site. Saratoga County is going to join an interoperability agreement with some of the surrounding counties. As a result, the county will be installing several new antennae on the new tower at the .24 site. The county has accepted the new radio system that has been running for a few years in Saratoga County. We have no word yet on the fate of the old tower which houses our antennae for all our equipment.

Next year's swapfest is scheduled for 3-12-2016 (2nd Saturday in March). We have to make sure that we get on the reservation schedule for the solar building.

Field Day, June 27 and 28 this year. Both Carl Zielman (Saratoga Co Emergency coordinator) and Saratoga County Sheriff Zurlow have accepted an invitation to visit the site, and view our emergency communications capability.

Upcoming Public Service Tour de Cure June 7, Rosie's Walk and CF Cycle for Life scheduled for same day, Sept 12 (day before our Ham Fest), the Apple Walk and the SET exercise are both scheduled for Oct 3, and finally the Tow Path Duathlon is slated for Oct 18

President's Message June 2015 - Tim Kemp N2MBX

The May meeting was a big success. We had about 30 persons take the National Weather Service Skywarn training. Thanks to Fred W2EMS for setting it up.

Reminder:

Wilton EMS has partnered with Time Warner to offer enhanced WiFi at their station. If you are already a Time Warner Cable (TWC) subscriber, then you can log on with your mobile devices at the station. Just be sure to bring your log on information next time you come to a club function. If you are not a subscriber or forgot your log on information, then you can log on anyway. The log on is good for one hour at a time.

New Member/New Hams - REPRINT

We have several public service events coming up and Field Day. Participating in any or all of these events is FUN and helpful in launching your Ham Radio experience. Experienced operators will help you with ALL aspects of radio, setting up stations, buying equipment, building equipment, antennas and everything else in between. I got my restart in HF when I attended Field Day a few years ago. Now I enjoy operating portable HF and am continuously updating my emergency preparedness. It all starts with getting on the air, public service events are a great, low stress way to do just that. If you don't have the equipment or are unsure of what to do, you can ride along with someone with experience. If you just don't have the gear, you can borrow some. Most Hams have extra stuff; I know that is my case. I always bring it along to the events just in case someone else needs it.

I would like see more of the younger members at the events this Spring and Summer. You will be surprised what getting involved does to making your Ham Radio experience more fun.

Elections

We will be electing Officer's for OUR club at the next meeting. Please consider attending and volunteering to be an Officer. We have just the right level of involvement for YOU. Work load is very low for most positions. Even President is not very time consuming.

Club Equipment

After the Elections and other Club business, we will be examining our club equipment. This will be a good time to get to know the gear we use at Field Day. We will review the new portable tower gear and the Field Day plan. Come and join in on the fun and see what the Club has to offer during an emergency.

73s Tim

New Propagation Beacon for K2DLL

Here is a picture of our newest propagation beacon we will be putting on the air. We received this beacon as a loan from W1AIM in northern VT. Along with the beacon, we also received a loan of an appropriate antenna. It is a 10 watt max beacon which will be on the air at 903.087 MHz. It's in a well-built box measuring $4\frac{1}{2}$ W X $7\frac{1}{2}$ L X 2 H ($3\frac{1}{4}$ Height with heat sink).

If you have equipment for this band listen for it. It is beaconding "VVV DE K2DLL/B FN23XC PROVIDENCE NY 903.087 MHZ PSE QSL" with a 15 second steady carrier.

This will join our other beacons at 144.290, 222.050 and 1296.3 MHz. These beacons provide a service to amateurs throughout a wide area of the Mid Atlantic States and New England.



Left. Here is the outside of the new 903 mhz beacon. While in this photo, it is sitting waiting to be programmed, it is now at the 147.24 repeater site, but with a marginal antenna. There happened to be an existing vertical antenna on the tower. Vertical polarization is not the desired mode, but for expediency and testing, we are using it. A proper antenna will be put on the tower later.

Right. Here's the newest K2DLL Beacon, It's a nice box outside, but its what's inside that counts the most. To the extreme right of the picture is the 300 MHz master oscillator. In the center is the ID'er board on the top layer, and below that is the frequency tripler, bringing the signal to it final 900 MHz frequency. The module on the left is the power amplifier, capable of producing 8 to 10 watts of power at 900 Mhz



FCC Goes Paperless

In order to streamline procedures and save money, the FCC stopped routinely printing and mailing licenses in February.

There are a number of ways a license holder can obtain an official copy of their license. The official license will display the FCC logo and the watermark "Official Copy" will be printed across each page of an official authorization from FCC.

1. **Download and Print License:** The licensee can log into the FCC ULS License Manager System <http://wireless.fcc.gov/uls/> with their FRN and password to 'Download the Electronic Authorization' of the official license. On the 'Download Authorizations' page the license holder will add their call sign to the 'Authorizations to Download' and then click download. The PDF of the license can be saved to a computer and printed later or the file can be opened and printed immediately.

2. **Login and Set Paper Preferences:** The licensee can log into the FCC ULS License Manager System <http://wireless.fcc.gov/uls/> with their FRN and password and set their own paper authorization preferences for future mailings. This option determines whether a user will receive paper authorizations (printed license and FRN information) from the FCC. The license holder would select either YES or NO and then click SAVE. By selecting YES, you will continue to receive paper authorizations printed and mailed by the FCC. By selecting NO, you will not receive authorizations printed and mailed from the FCC. This preference will affect all granted authorizations on this FRN.

3. **Receive License via email:** When modifying, renewing or requesting a duplicate copy of the license, a licensee who already has an FCC Registration Number (FRN) and provides a valid e-mail address under "Applicant Information" while logged in to the ULS system will receive an official ULS-generated electronic authorization via e-mail.

The action of adding a valid e-mail address into the FCC system can also be performed by a VEC filing new, upgraded, modified or renewed licenses on behalf of applicants.

4. **Contact FCC:** Licensees may contact FCC Support via the web, by telephone (1-888 225-5322) or by mail to request paper licenses. Please note that FCC recently stopped using distinctive paper stock to produce hard copy licenses and has been printing these on "standard, white recycled paper." The Bureau noted that the distinctive paper stock it had used was six times more expensive than the plain recycled paper it now uses.

An unofficial "reference copy" can always be printed from the FCC's ULS License database <http://wireless.fcc.gov/uls/>.

New licensees may choose to register their SSN (social security number) with the FCC and receive a FRN before the exam date to make retrieving a copy of their new license after the session much easier.

VE Teams may accept photocopies or printouts of licenses from the follow sources: the official license or reference license printed from the FCC website, and license data printed out from the ARRL website or QRZ website. This information can be found on the ARRL web page what to bring to an exam session.

VE Testing News

Expired License Credit Overview

In July of 2014, the FCC revised the Amateur Service Part 97 rules to grant partial written examination element credit to holders of expired General, Advanced and Extra licenses. The FCC requires former licensees — those falling outside the 2-year grace period — to pass Element 2 (Technician) in order to be relicensed. To take advantage of the new rule, holders of expired licenses must attend an exam session. There they would present a photo ID and their expired license proof, pay the \$15 exam session processing fee and take the Technician exam.

If an applicant held a General or Advanced license, and has proof, the FCC will afford credit for the General (Element 3) written exam only. If an applicant held an Extra license, and has proof, the FCC will afford credit for the General (Element 3) and Extra (Element 4) written exams. At VE exam sessions it is the applicant (not the VEs or coordinating VEC) who is responsible for supplying the evidence of holding valid expired license credit. Acceptable forms of proof can be found on the Exam Element Credit web page www.arrl.org/exam-element-credit.

Additional information and clarification is located on the VE Resources page www.arrl.org/resources-for-ves in the section titled "Exam Element Credit".

Conditional Licenses

Things get tricky when looking for expired license credit using a Conditional license.

FCC rule §97.505(a) for Element credit states: The administering VEs must give credit as specified below to an examinee holding any of the following license grants:

Operator class: Expired and the beyond 2 year renewal grace period Element Credit

Amateur Extra Elements 3 and 4

Advanced

General

Technician granted before March 21, 1987 Element 3

Technician Plus

Technician granted on or after March 21, 1987 No credit

As you can see the FCC did not make provisions for Conditional licensees to receive expired license credit. ARRL VEC can petition the FCC on behalf of a candidate and hope that they will allow the credit.

The candidate will attend an exam session where they would be treated like any other test candidate. At the session they would present a photo ID, and a copy of the old conditional license proof. They would pay the \$15 session processing fee and of course a 605 form would need to be filled out and signed by the candidate and the VE team. The candidate should attach a letter to the paperwork asking the FCC for General element license credit based on the expired conditional license.

If the candidate has a current Technician license no exams will be taken. If they are unlicensed, then they would have had to pass the Technician exam in addition to submitting the conditional license proof.

Field Day 2015 - Tim Kemp N2MBX

Make plans now to attend this year's Field Day on the 4th full weekend in June, the 26th - 28th of June 2015. Once again K2DLL will go on the air from the Wilton EMS building. We had 3 air conditioned operating points last year and are planning to do it again this year. The Get On The Air (GOTA) station will also be active for Hams that have not ever participated before in a Field Day or have been inactive for a long time. The GOTA station is also for non Hams, especially youth. This is the perfect time to get the neighbors, the kids, the grandkids and any friends on the air. We also eat well at Field Day!!! I am ahead of schedule getting donations for the food. We will have donuts, bagels, coffee, orange juice and milk for both Saturday and Sunday. For lunch both days we will have hot dogs, hamburgers, chips and soda. Saturday evening we will have chicken and maybe steaks on the grill.

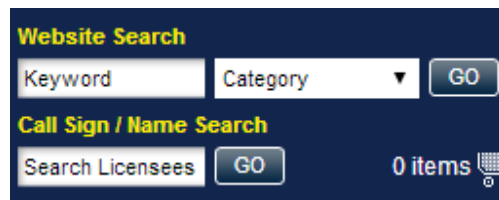
We are going to try a new tower system this year for the front of the WEMS building. The new tower will provide a center point for a 40 meter dipole and an 80 meter dipole. We still have the multiband BuckMaster OC fed dipole. We really need to concentrate on being able to work 20 meters on phone and CW at the same time. This year we will be in the 4A category (4 operators on the air at one time). Last year we had many times where we needed another station on the air. Bring any ideas for Field Day 2015 to the June meeting or send me an email: N2MBX@arrl.net

Elections coming up

During the June meeting to be held on June 8, we will hold our annual elections. Our board of directors is composed of 8 elected officials. They include President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and 4 at-large directors. If you are interested in running for any of these positions, please let me know as soon as possible. You can contact me at KG2H@ARRL.net. All positions are available and need to be filled. It's been years since we have had any competition for any of the seats, usually it's like pulling teeth to get the nomination slate together. As of this writing, I know that at least one of the existing members, Hal, AK2E, is looking forward to fully enjoying his retirement years. Mitch WA2MCS has expressed a desire for another to fill his position as Secretary.

Board members have an ideal position to help lead the club with new ideas and directions. Please consider running for any position. If you want further information, please feel free to contact any of the existing board members. Their email addresses are at the back of the newsletter.

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. You do not need to be a member of ARRL to enjoy this capability.



Website Search

Keyword Category GO

Call Sign / Name Search

Search Licensees GO 0 items

UPCOMING PUBLIC SERVICE

June 7 — Tour de Cure (WB2NSC)
June 27 and 28—Field Day
Sept 12— Rosie's Walk
Sept 12— CF Cycle for Life
Sept 13 — SCARA HamFest (Ballston Spa)
Oct 3—Apple Walk
Oct 3—SET (Simulated Emergency Test)
Oct 13—Tow Path Duathlon



Theatre curtain on the cruise ship Norwegian Gem



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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

For June is Elections, Field Day planning, and club equipment familiarization.

Then on June 27 and 28 is Field Day. Setup for field day will start on Friday June 26 at the Wilton EMS building. Please drop by in the afternoon to help with the setup.

July and August are summer hiatus months, no club meetings or newsletter planned,

Saratoga County Amateur Radio Association
presents our 30th annual

HAMFEST 2015

When: Sunday, September 13th Gates open at 7:00am

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

Cost: \$10 per person that includes hourly door prize drawing, an 8'x8' "tailgate" space to sell your equipment



- ✓ **KJI Electronics will be in attendance selling new Ham Radio Gear**
- ✓ Door prizes drawn hourly (must be present to win)
- ✓ Drawing held at noon for "major" prize (need not to be present to win)
- ✓ VE exam to be held at 9:00am (off site)

- Cornell Co-Op Extension (The SOLAR Building), 50 W High St, Ballston Spa, NY 12020

- ✓ Lots of new and used equipment
- ✓ Inside tables available for \$10 each on a first come, first serve basis
- ✓ Reservations and prepay welcome and encouraged
- ✓ Food booth open all day serving:

- Breakfast



- Coffee
- Pastries
- Breakfast sandwiches

- Lunch



- Hamburgers
- Hotdogs
- Sausages (with peppers and onions)



Directions:

- I-87 to exit 12
- West on route 67 to Ballston Spa
- At the intersection of route 67 and route 50 look for signs to the HAMFEST

Talk-in:

K2DLL repeater system
147.000 PL91.5
147.240 PL 91.5

For information or reservations contact: Darlene Lake, 314 Loudon Road #84,
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