Sparks from the Spa

A PUBLICATION OF SARATOGA COUNTY AMATEUR RADIO ASSOCIATION

Monthly Meeting—April 9

For our monthly meeting we were honored to have 2 field officials from the ARRL Eastern New York section. Dave Galletly, KM2O the Section Emergency Coordinator (SEC) for ENY, and John Fritze, K2QY, Northern District Emergency Coordinator for ENY joined us for an enlightening evening.

Dave started out explaining the duties of the SEC. He is charged with providing services to various partners, including NWS, ARES, RACES, Red Cross, NYS SEMO, local governments, and others. The ENY section has approximately 3.37 million residents. He presented a detailed outline of the ARES organization, and showed similarities to the RACES organization. The 2 organizations are similar, but not identical, and could merge with a little tweaking.

John then spoke about his duties as Northern District EC, focusing his presentation on plans created for emergencies in Albany County. These are all documented, and available on line.

Board of Directors meeting 4-09

The board of Directors meeting was held at 6:30 PM preceding the above general meeting. Jim KG2H presented a treasurer's report. Dave N2FEP thanks Jim (K2LM) and Frank (KA2QYE) for getting the antenna on the .36 back on the tower, at its normal height. The repeater is working back at its normal capability now.

Fred W2EMS, discussed using the ICS (incident command system), as a basis for running Field Day this year. This would be good practice for using ICS, as this an accepted method for defining the hierarchy and responsibilities of an actual emergency situation.

Tim N2MBX will be the Field Day leader this year.

Tim stated that he would still like to pursue the possibility of setting up a remote control station for our equipment at some time in the future.

Jim K2LM discussed the work needed to be done at the .24 site. We might be able to save money on the repair to our .24 repeater if we can locate a small building housing our equipment, inside the fencing at the Providence site. Dave will look into the possibility.

It was brought to our attention that the VHF \ UHF ham radio at the NWS in Albany has died, and needs to be replaced. Donations have been requested to purchase a replacement. Unfortunately, our club will have to pass on making a donation because of our heavy expenses in updating the .24 site. Anyone wishing to make a donation, can contact Bruce, WA3AFS, wa3afs@nycap.rr.com

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Next Meeting May 14 7:30 PM

REMOTE OPERATION IS COOL

Last month, we reported that Steve, WA2TTP, successfully operated his home HF station remotely, while he was in Florida. The following is an article from Steve, detailing his station.

I reported in last months news letter that my remote base station worked perfectly from Florida so riding on that success I decided to take it up a notch for next years operation. I added an Ameritron ALS-600 amp which gives me 600 watts which will help on 160 thru 40 when the bands are a little noisy. I choose this amp based on it's ease of being remotely band switched, metered and controlled. I also purchased an Elcraft KRC2 band decoder which plugs into the TS-480 serial port and provides sink and source outputs for each band automatically as the bands are changed on the radio. This unit will be connected to the amp and my antenna system controls to automate those functions.

From an operating stand point the most productive bands were 40 and 20 meters but I operated 160 thru 15 meters. Most of time I was on the air around 2300 to 0200 local. I'm an owl. I found 20 meters to be very quiet at that time but usually open to the Pacific. The picture shows the operating setup. The laptop is used to control power to radio, antenna selection and rotor control.

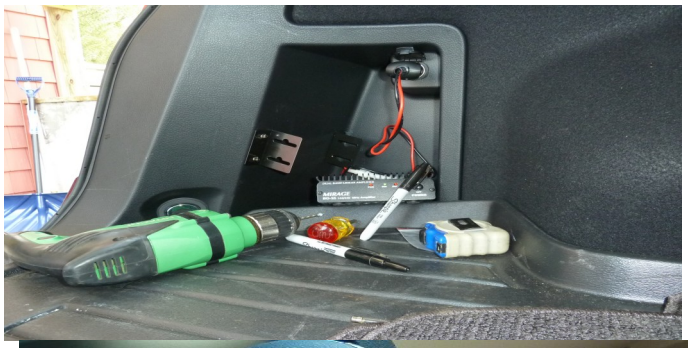
GETTING MOBILE AGAIN. KG2H

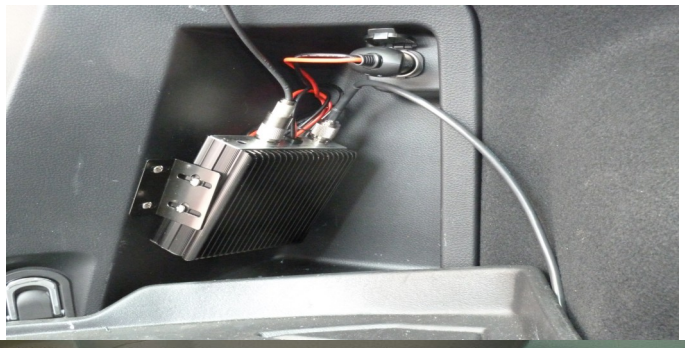
After several years of not having a mobile rig permanently installed in the vehicle, I decided that it was time to do something. I considered the possibilities, and the most obvious would be to buy and install one of the new rigs with a remote head. After browsing the possibilities afforded by the big names, I had second thoughts. They were all up there in cost, and why in the heck do I want to take up a lot of space in the vehicle. Now, my vehicle is not a small car, as a matter of fact, it's rather generous in size (Subaru Outback station wagon), but still I could not design an installation I would be happy with. I have a perfectly good, although older, dual band handheld. The problem with handhelds, is that they don't have a lot of oomph for reliable operation into the repeaters.

As I was pondering the choices and catalogs, I hit upon another (and I think better) solution. Mirage makes a nice small dual band power amplifier designed to boost a handheld's output. 5 watts in, gets you 40 out, and 2 1/2 watts gets you 30. I bought a model BD-35. You've got to supply about 7 amps to the amplifier. It's physical size is a hair less than 5 inches square.

The Subaru has a very nice little cubby in the back compartment which looks as if it's made just for this purpose. There is a nice 10 Amp power outlet right there, so no extra wiring needed. I spent about an hour and a half mounting the brick and shortening the antenna lead to make a nice neat installation.

Here are some pictures showing you the final product. It works for me!





TAKE A BREAK

Here are some upcoming contests which caught my eye. For more details see the sponsor link. For a more comprehensive list see the Contest Corral on the ARRL website.

May 12 - 50 Mhz Spring Sprint - sites.google.com/site/springvhfupsprints

May 26 - CQ WW WPX - www.qrparci.org/contests

May 27 - QRP ARCI Hootowl Sprint - www.qrparci.org/contests

June 9 - June VHF QSO Party - arrl.org

June 23 - 24 - ARRL Field Day - join us at the Wilton EMS building

UPCOMING PROGRAMS

Anticipated Upcoming Programs

The following programs will be at our normal location, the Wilton EMS building, at 7:30PM. Board Meeting at 6:30 before the general meeting

May 14—Jim McKnight tells us all about the equipment we own, and just what it does

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Got News or information you would like to get published? How a bout 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 new email address :

SparksFromTheSpa@gmail.com

UPCOMING PUBLIC SERVICE

May 27—Lions Club Duathlon - 8 AM—Jim McKnight K2LM

June 3 - Toure deCure - 8AM - Lee Palmer WB2NSC

June 23-24 - Field Day at the Wilton Emergency Squad Building

Sept 15 - Rosie's Walk - 9 AM - Galway - Dave Atwell N2FEP

October 14 - Mohawk Towpath Duathlon - 8 AM - Fred Halley W2EMS