Sparks from the Spa

A PUBLICATION OF SARATOGA COUNTY AMATEUR RADIO ASSOCIATION

During the January meeting, Fred, W2EMS (Center) introduces the new ARES Assistant Coordinators. Tim Kemp (N2MBX) is on the left, and Phil Weissman (KC2YLM) is on the right

Next General Meeting

Feb 11—7:30 PM

Come to the next meeting on Feb 11. The schedule for the night is not firm yet, I'm sure you will be surprised. Remember that the March meeting is not slated for our normal Monday night timeslot. March is our annual Swapfest which is held at the Cooperative Extension Building at 50 West High Street in Ballston Spa. It will start at approximately 8 AM, running until approximately 11 AM. We will have an exam session directly afterward at Noon.

Board of Directors Meeting – January 14

The board had its monthly meeting at 6:30 prior to the general club meeting. Several topics were discussed.

Door prizes for the hamfest and swapfest were discussed. The swapfest will be held on March 9 from 8 AM to 11 AM, in the solar building in Ballston Spa, with an exam session held afterward at noon.
The treasurer gave his report. The highlight was a comparison summary of Revenue and Expenditures between calendar year 2011 and 2012. In 2012 our total revenue decreased by $500, due primarily to a decrease of $700 in the hamfest revenue. Along with our anticipated high expenses in 2013 due to the necessity of moving our .24 repeater and related radios from the old tower at Lake Nancy to the new tower, a discussion was held about revenues.
Discussion centered on membership dues. Dues are presently $10 per year, and have been for a very long time. The possibility of raising them from $10 to $15 was supported by many, but the vote was put off until the new board is elected in June. The board wants to hear opinions from our members before acting.

Is the proposed amount too high? Would this increase cause you not to renew your membership? Should it be higher? Do you have ideas for other ways to raise revenue? If you do, would you be willing to support those ideas with your time and effort if your proposal will need that volunteer work? You can contact the board directly via the email addresses at the back of the newsletter, or send a note to the editor at SPARKSFROMTHESPA@GMAIL.COM, and I will forward your comments to the board.

General membership meeting – January 14

Tim Kemp N2MBX discussed how and why to set up a new email address using Google's gmail service. Tim set his up a long time ago to help him accommodate his email needs in relation to his employer's requirements for being able to access his corporate account at home.
Since then, Tim has retired but he still uses gmail for all his personal needs. He demonstrated the capabilities of gmail, in terms of volume of storage and versatility of searching through years of emails for specific items he might want to recall.

Boy Scouts Saratoga District Spring Camporee May 18th – Tim Kemp N2MBX

A few months ago I discussed the long history of Amateur Radio and Boy Scouting in a newsletter article. In that article I appealed for Hams to become Merit Badge Counselors for the Radio Merit Badge. That appeal is still active, I know some of you club members are interested in furthering our hobby by sharing with our youth. Let me know if you are interested in becoming a Merit Badge Counselor. My email is N2MBX@ARRL.net .

Now on to the subject of this article, to provide a presence of Amateur Radio in the minds of all Scouts, I want to operate a Ham Station at the District and Council Camporees. These Camporees occur in the Spring and Fall every year. A Camporee is an event where all of the Troops of a District or Council camp in one location and cycle through a program of small venues based on the theme of the Camporee. This year the Spring Camporee is a "District" event. That means that each District in the Twin Rivers Council will be hosting their own Camporee. The Saratoga District (covers Saratoga County) will be holding their Camporee on May 17th – May 19th. My plan is to have a Ham Station up and running on the Saturday of the event, May 18th. The Ham Station will not be one of the themed venues. It will be simply an information and demonstration location. Again, my objective is to expose the Scouts to Ham Radio.

Of course an event such as this is more fun with more Hams involved so if you are interested in helping out, let me know. My plan is to setup Saturday morning wherever the Camporee is located, starting at 8:00 am. The station can have as many rigs as we have operators. I have a HF all band vertical that I plan to set up. I will also have a 2m and 440 rig and antenna. We could put up our club portable tower if we have enough interest. Otherwise possibly a G5RV could be put up. Other ideas to demonstrate are: Solar power, Satellite Radio contacts and digital modes. This will be a good time for all of us to prepare for Field Day. We could operate until we have had enough, I may stay until 8:00 pm just to see how much interest we have from the Scouts.
Depending on where the Camporee is located, we may have to provide our own shelter. I am working on that now. The District is considering 2 different locations at present, Camp Boyhaven near Middle Grove and The Schenectady Air and Space Museum. I will advise when it is confirmed which location is a go.

Please help out, it will be a lot of fun. The next Camporee will occur in the Fall, sometime in October.

Exams in the news

Warren County Radio Club recently gave it's very first Volunteer Exam session on January 12. Since this was their first effort, our club was asked by their president, Donald James, N2VU, if we might be able to help them out with a few pointers. Jim K2LM, Frank KA2QYE, and Jim KG2H, went up to their exam site to give them a hand. Their exam room was in the Warren County Municipal Center, and a very nice meeting room it is. They had 6 brand new VE's in the club, and several other members who volunteered. They had 9 candidates, and of that total, there was a new Tech, a new General, and 4 upgrades to Extra class. Great work guys.

Their anticipation is that they will provide exam opportunities at times alternating with our club. Saratoga give exams at our swapfest in March, and the hamfest in September. They will pick times to compliment us.

Speaking of the swapfest, ours will be in the usual location, 50 West High Steet in Ballston Spa, on Saturday March 9, from 8 to 11. We will hold our exam session at noon, in the same room.

If you live in the Fulton, Montgomery county area, their club gives exams every third Wednesday of the month. Find the details on the net at K2JJI.ORG

Contests—Spend a few hours playing in these:

Feb 15 Russian WW PSK Contest
Feb 16 ARRL Int'l CW DX Contest
Feb 16 Feld-Hell Annual WAS Sprint
Feb 18 Run For the Bacon
Feb 20 Semi-Automatic Key Evening
Feb 22 CQ WW 160 Meter SSB
Feb 23 REF Contest
Feb 23 UBA Contest
Feb 23 Mississippi QSO Party
Feb 23 North American QSO Party RTTY
Feb 24 North Carolina QSO Party
Feb 25 CQC Winter QSO Party
Mar 1 NS Weekly Sprint
Mar 2 ARRL Int'l Phone DX Contest
Mar 2 Open Ukraine RTTY Championship
Mar 4 OK1WC Memorial Contest
Mar 5 ARS Spartan Sprint
Mar 5 YL CW Party
Mar 6 John Rollins Memorial DX Contest
Mar 9 RSGB Commonwealth Contest
Mar 9 AGCW QRP Contest
Mar 9 QRP ARCI HF Grid Square Sprint
Mar 9 EA PSK63 Contest
Mar 9 Idaho QSO Party
Mar 10 North American RTTY Sprint
Mar 10 Wisconsin QSO Party

FCC Denies Missouri Ham's *Petition* Regarding CC&Rs

On January 28, the FCC denied a *Petition for Reconsideration* (*PFR*) filed by James E. Whedbee, N0ECN, of Gladstone, Missouri. Whedbee filed the *PFR* in May 2012 in response to the FCC denying his *Petition for Declaratory Ruling* (*PDR*) filed in April 2012 that urged the FCC to address covenants, conditions and restrictions (CC&Rs).
In his *PDR*, Whedbee argued that CC&Rs restrict Amateur Radio facilities in violation of Section 310 (d) of the Communications Act of 1934, as amended. He also asserted that there is a "controversy of CCR enforcement against Amateur Radio operators," and "requested a declaratory ruling terminating the controversy by holding that such CC&Rs are unenforceable."
The FCC concluded that the Mobility Division "properly acted" on Whedbee's *PFR*: "Given the opportunity for public comment already afforded by the *Public Notice* and the opening of GN Docket No. 12-91, and in light of the pendency (and later release) of the Commission's report to Congress and the statutory purpose of that report, your *Petition*was moot, premature, repetitive and frivolous."

Time to upgrade your license

So, you want to take an exam, perhaps to upgrade to a higher class license, or maybe you know someone who wants to become a new ham. You went to ARRL.ORG and followed the links to find a session convenient to you. Now what.

Most exam sessions do not require pre-registration, but if the listing that you're interested in does, call or email the listed team contact in order to get on the roster.

What do you need to bring with you? Two forms of ID. One can be your driver's license, and one can be your ham license. There are many different things that are valid. A library card is OK, even a piece of mail with your address on it is OK.

Bring a copy of your Ham License. It will have your FRN which you do need to have. When you pass the exam, the examiners will need to forward that copy to the ARRL with your form 605. If you passed a previous test that the FCC has not acted upon yet, (maybe you passed General last week, and now want to take Extra but you don't have your General license yet), bring your CSCE and a copy of that also. Bring a pen and pencil. You need a pen to fill out the Form 605, and a pencil with a good eraser to fill out the bubble answer sheet,

Oh, and one last thing, bring the proper fee. At the present time, its $15. A check is OK.

GOOD LUCK

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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 new email address :

SparksFromTheSpa@gmail.com

UPCOMING PUBLIC SERVICE

May 18—Boy Scout Camporee.