Sparks from the Spa

A PUBLICATION OF SARATOGA COUNTY AMATEUR RADIO ASSOCIATION

## January 2017 Meeting

Jim KG2H

January Board Meeting

Treasurer's report
Upcoming meetings – Feb Daniel on SDR and what you can do with the dongle. March 11 (Saturday) Swapfest.
Doorprize for swapfest? Something along the SDR theme?

January General Membership Meeting

John Rey gave a quick introduction to a new SAR (Search and Rescue) team being formed. They are willing to go where needed in the NY, VT and MA area.

Fred Halley, W2EMS, gave a talk about emergency communications courses, specifically IS 100B, IS 200B, IS 700A and IS 800B. If we are going to get seriously involved with public service communications we really need to take these courses. Government officials are not really interested in our capabilities unless we can understand their needs and procedures. These courses will provide us with the necessary background. You register with FEMA to get a student ID, and get started.

You can get in touch with Fred to get further information.

## Upcoming February Meeting

The second Monday of February is the 13th. Our meeting will be held at its normal location at the Wilton EMS building. The Board meeting starts at 6:30 PM, and the General membership meeting starts at 7:00 PM.

This month, we expect to drag you kicking and screaming into the 21st century with an intoduction discussion of SDR.

SDR (Software Defined Radio) is the current state of the art, and Daniel Novik, KD2LTV is going to share some of his experience using an inexpensive "dongle" to plug into a computer, and some free software to turn your computer into a pretty decent wide band receiver.

In Daniel's own words:

"In the last decade or so, we have been experimenting and using various digital voice standards like d-star and DMR in place of analog standards such as FM. These new digital voice standards have tons of very advanced features (like automatic call sign identification, multiple conversations on one channel, better signal reliability, data transmission, etc…), but if you try to listen in to a digital signal without the proper radio, it would just sound like a bunch of white noise. If you want to listen to digital voice, the cheapest way is to use an RTL-SDR, a small radio receiver that plugs into a computer, and can easily be found for as low as $12. Using software such as Sdrsharp, DSD+, and VB-Cable, will make the whole decoding process easier than you ever thought possible. "

Oh, and "dongle" is a real word, according to Wikipedia, "A **dongle** is a small piece of hardware that connects to another device to provide it with additional functionality.

## Renew your license Jim KG2H

On the back page of the newsletter I usually have a little piece on checking your ham radio license to make sure that your license does not expire. Well my turn came up, as my license expires on March 17, 2017.

It is easy to renew. Just go to HTTP://WIRELESS.FCC.GOV/ULS . You will need to know your FRN (which you will have when you check your info with the ARRL webpage, and your password. If you have registered previously, and forgot it, just click on the links to reset it, or if you never registered, do so at the time you go to the above link.

In my case, I did indeed previously register, and I knew my password. My renewal was a quick click, click, click, and in less than 2 minutes I renewed my license.

I had to laugh because one of VEC organizations (not ARRL) previously sent my wife a mailing offering to do the paperwork to renew her license last year for the mere fee of $17. Needless to say, we did not take advantage of their generous offer.

You can renew your license 90 days in advance of the expiration date, or up to 2 years after. If you renew after your expiration, you cannot operated after your expiration date until you renew. After 2 years, your license is terminated, and you have to retest to get it back.

Be sure you check it out!! If you have not previously registered, you can do so any time, and it will save you some time when it comes to renew!!

## Swapfest Test Session, March 11

Coming up on March 11 is our annual Swapfest. Along with that is the VE Exam Test Session. It will be held at the Cooperative Extension Building at 50 West High Street in Ballston Spa.

The swapfest starts at 8 AM, and runs until about 11 AM. We do a little cleaning up, and room converts into an exam room for Noon. Preregistration is NOT required, as we accept walk in candidates. We will be give all classes of licensing tests. We just ask that you arrive around 11:45 or a bit earlier, so that you can fill out the paperwork.

If you are going to take a test session for either a new or upgraded ham license, here are a few things you MUST bring along.

A copy of your current FCC license. We need to attach the license copy to the paperwork when you upgrade.

If you unlicensed, you have a few options. The FCC form 605 requires either a FRN or a SSN. You can obtain a FRN before the exam session by visiting www.wireless.FCC.gov/ULS You simply apply for the FRN on line, and you will have it with you when you come to the test session.

Another form of ID, a driver's license is great, or any other form of ID. If you don't have a driver's license, (perhaps you are too young for the DMV) the ARRL suggests something as simple as a library card, or even a piece of mail addressed to you at your residence.

A pen and pencil (with a good eraser). The pen is for filling out the FCC form 605, and the pencil is to fill out the bubble answer sheet.

The proper testing fee. Currently it is $15.

Your WITS. It is not a hard exam, so don't get too anxious about it.

Please arrive at least 15 minutes before the exam start time in order to fill out the paperwork, and for the VE's (Volunteer Examiners) to review it.

Another thing to bear in mind, is that for many of the testing sessions, the VE will have alternate versions of the various exam elements available for you to try a retake of the exam. If you do desire to take an alternate version, we must you charge you an additional testing fee.

If you DO NOT NEED to take any alternate versions, you may take the next higher level of exam for NO additional costs. For example, if you take and pass the Technician exam, you may take the General exam if you so desire, and there will be no additional fees. I have witnessed a few people who have come into the session unlicensed, and walk away with the Extra Class license.
GOOD LUCK.

**The following are some contests in the late February to Early March time frame which you might like to participate in.**

## Contest Corral — February 2017

Check for updates and a downloadable PDF version online at www.arrl.org/contests.

Refer to the contest websites for full rules, scoring information, operating periods or time limits, and log submission information.

| Start - Finish | | | | Bands | Contest name | Mode | Exchange | Sponsor's Website |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Date-Time | | Date-Time | | | | | | |
| 11 | 0000 | 12 | 2359 | 3.5-28 | CQ WW RTTY WPX Contest | Dig | RST, serial | www.cqwpxrtty.com/rules.htm |
| 11 | 1000 | 12 | 1000 | 1.8-28 | SARL Field Day Contest | CW Ph Dig | RS(T), # of xmtrs, category, Province | www.sarl.org.za |
| 11 | 1100 | 11 | 1300 | 7, 14 | Asia-Pacific Spring Sprint, CW | CW | RST, serial | jsfc.org/apsprint/aprule.txt |
| 11 | 1200 | 12 | 2359 | 1.8-50 | SKCC Weekend Sprintathon | CW | RST, SPC, name, mbr or "none" | www.skccgroup.com |
| 11 | 1200 | 12 | 1200 | 1.8 | KCJ Topband Contest | CW | RST, Prefecture or continent code | www.kcj-cw.com |
| 11 | 1200 | 12 | 1200 | 1.8-28 | Dutch PACC Contest | CW Ph | RS(T), Province or serial | pacc.veron.nl |
| 11 | 1500 | 12 | 1500 | 1.8-28 | OMISS QSO Party | Ph | RS, SPC, mbr (if any) | www.omiss.net |
| 11 | 1700 | 11 | 2100 | 3.5-28 | FISTS Winter Unlimited Sprint | CW | RST, SPC, name, mbr or power | fistsna.org |
| 11 | 2300 | 12 | 2300 | 3.5-14 | AWA AM QSO Party | Ph | Name, SPC | www.antiquewireless.org |
| 12 | 1200 | 12 | 1800 | 3.5,7 | Balkan HF Contest | CW Ph | RS(T), serial | balkan-hf.hamradio.ro/rules |
| 13 | 0100 | 13 | 0259 | 3.5-14 | CQC Winter QSO Party | CW | RST, SPC | www.coloradoqrpclub.org |
| **13** | **1300** | **17** | **2359** | **All** | **ARRL School Club Roundup** | **CW Ph Dig** | **RS(T), Class (I/C/S), SPC** | **www.arrl.org/school-club-roundup** |
| 14 | 0000 | 14 | 2359 | 1.8-7 | PODXS 070 Club Valentine Sprint | Dig | Name, "OM" or "YL," SPC | www.podxs070.com |
| 15 | 1900 | 15 | 2030 | 3.5 | AGCW Semi-Automatic Key Evening | CW | RST, serial, year first used a bug | agcw.org/index.php/en |
| **18** | **0000** | **19** | **2359** | **1.8-28** | **ARRL International DX Contest, CW** | **CW** | **RST, SP (DX: power)** | **www.arrl.org/arrl-dx** |
| 18 | 0000 | 26 | 2359 | 3.5, 7, 21, 28, 144 | Novice Rig Roundup | CW | RST, name, QTH, rig, xtal/VFO, power | novicerigroundup.com |
| 18 | 0800 | 18 | 1000 | 7 | SARL Youth Day Sprint | Ph | RS, age | www.sarl.org.za |
| 18 | 1200 | 19 | 1159 | 1.8-28 | Russian PSK WW Contest | Dig | RST, Oblast or serial | www.rdrclub.ru |
| 18 | 1900 | 18 | 2059 | 1.8-50 | Feld Hell Sprint | Dig | RST, name, mbr, SPC, grid | sites.google.com/site/feldhellclub |
| 20 | 0200 | 20 | 0400 | 1.8-28 | Run for the Bacon QRP Contest | CW | RST, SPC, mbr or power | qrpcontest.com/pigrun |
| 22 | 0000 | 22 | 0200 | 1.8-28 | SKCC Sprint | CW | RST, SPC, name, mbr or power | www.skccgroup.com |
| 22 | 0130 | 22 | 0330 | 1.8 | NAQCC CW Sprint | CW | RST, SPC, mbr or power | naqcc.info |
| 22 | 2000 | 22 | 2100 | 3.5 | UKEICC 80-Meter Contest | CW | 4-char grid square | www.ukeicc.com |
| 24 | 2200 | 26 | 2200 | 1.8 | CQ 160-Meter Contest, SSB | Ph | W/VE: RS, SP. DX: RS, CQ Zone | www.cq160.com/rules.htm |
| 25 | 0600 | 26 | 1800 | 3.5-28 | REF Contest, SSB | Ph | RS, French Department or serial | concours.r-e-f.org/contest/ |
| 25 | 1300 | 26 | 1300 | 3.5-28 | UBA DX Contest, CW | CW | RST, serial, ON province (if ON) | www.uba.be/en/traffic-news |
| 25 | 1500 | 26 | 0159 | 1.8-50 | South Carolina QSO Party | CW Ph Dig | RS(T), county or SPC | scqso.com/rules |
| **25** | **1800** | **26** | **0559** | **3.5-28** | **North American QSO Party, RTTY** | **Dig** | **Name, SPC** | **www.ncjweb.com** |
| 26 | 0900 | 26 | 1700 | 3.5-28 | High Speed Club CW Contest | CW | RST, mbr or "NM" | www.highspeedclub.org |
| 26 | 1300 | 26 | 1600 | 3.5-14 | SARL Digital Contest | Dig | RST, serial | www.sarl.org.za |
| 26 | 1500 | 27 | 0059 | 3.5-144 | North Carolina QSO Party | CW Ph Dig | County or SPC | rars.org/ncqsoparty |

All dates refer to UTC and may be different from calendar dates in North America. Times given as AM or PM are local times and dates.

# Contest Corral — March 2017

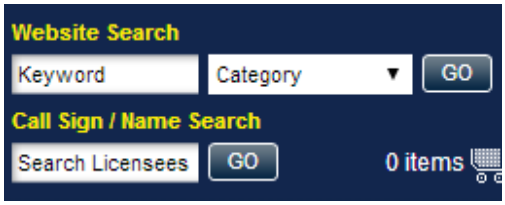
Check for updates and a downloadable PDF version online at www.arrl.org/contests.

Refer to the contest websites for full rules, scoring information, operating periods or time limits, and log submission information.

| Start - Finish Date-Time | | Date-Time | | Bands | Contest Name | Mode | Exchange | Sponsor's Website |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2000 | 1 | 2100 | 3.5 | UKEICC 80-Meter Contest | Ph | 4-char grid square | www.ukeicc.com |
| 2 | 1800 | 2 | 2200 | 28 | NRAU 10-Meter Activity Con- | CW Ph Dig | RS(T), 6-char grid square | www.nrau.net/activity-contests |
| **4** | **0000** | **5** | **2359** | **1.8-28** | **ARRL International** | **Ph** | **W/VE: RS, SP. DX: RS, power** | **www.arrl.org/arrl-dx** |
| 4 | 0600 | 4 | 0800 | 7-14 | Wake-Up! QRP Sprint | CW | RST, serial, suffix of previous QSO | qrp.ru/contest/wakeup |
| 4 | 1800 | 5 | 1359 | 1.8-28 | Open Ukraine RTTY Champion- | Dig | State/province/canton, etc., serial | uarl.com.ua/ |
| 5 | 0700 | 5 | 1100 | 3.5 | UBA Spring Contest, CW | CW | RST, serial, UBA section (if any) | uba.be/en/hf/contest-rules |
| 5 | 1100 | 5 | 1700 | 28 | DARC 10-Meter Digital Contest | Dig | RST, serial | www.darc.de |
| 5 | 1200 | 5 | 1400 | 7 | SARL Hamnet 40-Meter Simu-lated Emergency | Ph | RS, serial | www.sarl.org.za |
| 5 | 1200 | 5 | 2200 | 3.5 | NSARA Contest | CW Ph Dig | RS(T), Nova Scotia county (if any) | nsara.ve1cfy.net/?page_id=82 |
| 6 | 2000 | 6 | 2130 | 3.5 | RSGB 80-Meter Club Champi- | Dig | RST, serial | www.rsgbcc.org/hf |
| 7 | 0200 | 7 | 0400 | 3.5-28 | ARS Spartan Sprint | CW | RST, SPC, power | arsqrp.blogspot.com |
| 7 | 1900 | 7 | 2100 | 3.5 | AGCW YL-CW Party | CW | RST, serial, "YL" (if YL), name | www.agcw.org |
| 8 | 2300 | 12 | 2300 | 7-14 | AWA John Rollins DX Memorial | CW | RST, eqpt type, eqpt year | www.antiquewireless.org |
| 11 | 0800 | 11 | 1359 | 3.5-28 | Nauryz DX Contest | CW Ph | RS(T), 2-char oblast or ITU zone | www.nauryz-dx-contest.com |
| 11 | 1000 | 12 | 1000 | 50-1296 | SARL VHF/UHF Analogue/ | Dig | RS, 6-char grid locator | www.sarl.org.za |
| 11 | 1000 | 12 | 1000 | 3.5-28 | RSGB Commonwealth Contest | CW | RST, serial | www.rsgbcc.org/hf |
| 11 | 1200 | 12 | 1200 | 3.5-28, | F9AA Cup, SSB | Ph | RST, serial | www.site.urc.asso.fr |
| 11 | 1200 | 12 | 1200 | 28 | South America 10-Meter Con- | CW Ph | RS(T), CQ zone | sa10m.com.ar |
| 11 | 1200 | 12 | 2359 | 1.8-50 | SKCC Weekend Sprintathon | CW | RST, SPC, name, mbr or "none" | www.skccgroup.com |
| 11 | 1400 | 11 | 2000 | 3.5-28 | AGCW QRP Contest | CW | RST, serial, class, mbr or "NM" | www.agcw.org |
| 11 | 1400 | 12 | 2000 | 3.5-50 | Oklahoma QSO Party | CW Ph Dig | RS(T), county or SPC | k5cm.com/okqp.htm |
| 11 | 1500 | 12 | 1500 | 1.8 | Stew Perry Topband Challenge | CW | 4-char grid square | www.kkn.net/stew |
| 11 | 1600 | 12 | 1600 | 3.5-28 | EA PSK63 Contest | Dig | RSQ, EA province code or serial | concursos.ure.es/en |
| 11 | 1800 | 12 | 1800 | 1.8-50 | QCWA QSO Party | CW Ph Dig | Year licensed, name, SPC or QCWA | www.qcwa.org |
| 11 | 1800 | 13 | 0559 | 3.5 | TESLA Memorial HF CW Con- | CW | RST, serial, 4-char grid square | www.radiosport.org.rs |
| 11 | 1900 | 12 | 1900 | 1.8-28 | Idaho QSO Party | CW Ph Dig | RS(T), county or SPC | idahoarrl.info/qsoparty |
| 11 | 2000 | 11 | 2359 | 1.8-28 | QRP ARCI Spring Thaw SSB | Ph | RS, SPC, mbr or power | www.qrparci.org/contests |
| **12** | **0000** | **12** | **0400** | **3.5-14** | **North American Sprint, RTTY** | **Dig** | **Other station's call, your call,** | **ncjweb.com/Sprint-Rules.pdf** |
| 12 | 0700 | 12 | 1100 | 144 | UBA Spring Contest, 2 Meter | CW Ph | RS(T), serial, UBA Section (if any) | uba.be/en/hf/contest-rules |
| 12 | 1800 | 12 | 2200 | 3.5 | WAB 3.5 MHz Phone | Ph | RS, serial, WAB square or country | wab.intermip.net |
| 12 | 1800 | 13 | 0100 | All | Wisconsin QSO Party | CW Ph Dig | County or SPC | www.warac.org/wqp |
| 15 | 2000 | 15 | 2130 | 3.5 | RSGB 80-Meter Club Champi- | CW | RST, serial | www.rsgbcc.org/hf |
| 16 | 0030 | 16 | 0230 | 1.8 | NAQCC CW Sprint | CW | RST, SPC, mbr or power | naqcc.info |

refer to UTC and may be different from calendar dates in North America. Times given as AM or PM are local times and dates.

**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 you 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 91.5 Hz CTCSS encode/decode.
147.360 MHz +600 Hz (add 91.5 Hz to connect to the NYS Network

Middleburgh NY
448.925 PL 107.2 WA2TTP-R Steve's Repeater is linked to ours via UHF

## Officers

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Please be sure to visit our webpage for any late breaking news or newletter 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 :
**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

## Membership Dues

Yes, its that time of the year again. Our membership year runs from January to December. We are real bargain at only $10 per year. If you are unsure of when your dues expire (many people pay several years in advance) please drop me an email at KG2H@ ARRL.NET

Please fill out the form below and mail it to me. I would like your email address on the form, in case I don't have the one you want me to use, and also I have some members who have emails that bounce for one reason or another. The ARRL membership question is important since we are an ARRL affiliated club. We need to report the percentage of our members who are also ARRL members.

Finally make out your check to Saratoga County R.A.C.E.S. as that is the legal name on our corporate papers, and also on our bank account.

Thanks

**Saratoga County Amateur Radio Association Membership Information**
**Please Print CLEARLY**

Name _____

Callsign _____

Email Address _____

License Class N T G A E

ARRL Member YES NO

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