

# Sparks from the Spa



A PUBLICATION OF SARATOGA COUNTY R.A.C.E.S. ASSOCIATION, INC.

## PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

In most of my past 25 years in amateur radio, I have always liked trying to repair radios. Oh yes I have let the smoke out of a few and gotten zapped by a high voltage power supply or two but I have learned more and more about electronics.

What I have learned in my attempts to repair radios can be summed up by saying, "most of the problems are mechanical problems". This is good news because when I looked inside my new Yaesu FT-8900 mobile there is nothing inside and the few components that are there I don't even want to try to touch.

OK, so what mechanical problems am I talking about? In a radio, switches, volume and squelch controls but don't look here first. Look outside the radio.

### Outside the radio--

1) mechanical problems in the antenna system. I use Larsen antennas. At least once a year I unscrew the antennas from the NMO mounts and with a hard eraser, I clean up the contacts, especially the center pin. Are the UHF connectors still screwed tightly to the diplexer and back of the rig? UHF connectors have a way of becoming loose over time.

2) DC supply trouble. First I strongly recommend that you run the power for the rig directly from the battery, but if you don't or even if you do, has something changed in the DC feed? The trouble will of course be worse when you are transmitting on high power and pulling the most current from the battery.

So when signals get noisy or someone can't hear you, look to the mechanical side first.

Jim  
K2LM

## Saratoga RACES Board Meeting

Date: April 11, 2005

Wilton EMS Building

Present: Darlene, N2XQG; Joanna, N2QFT; Dave, N2FEP; Al, KA1IEG; Mark, KA2FBZ; Jim, KG2H; Susan, N2EKQ; Peter, KA2DHZ; Jim, K2LM

1. Meeting was called to order at 6:38 pm by Darlene, then after treasurer's report, taken over by Jim, K2LM. We met in the ambulance bay since the remodeled meeting room has not yet been completed, but will be prior to our next meeting.
2. Treasurer's report was received.
3. Dave, N2FEP: Radio room has been moved to its new location at the Wilton Emergency Corp. The set up has been re-established and we will have the ability to use the ceiling to drop down lines into the meeting room to use equipment out there also. The radio room should be put back in service soon and help will be needed. The County received a Scene Support van for homeland security. This is a 38 ft motor coach with generator. There is enough room for amateur radio and operator. This communications vehicle is to be used by desk operators of the Saratoga County Sheriffs Department. We will be putting a radio in this van pending written approval of the county. MSC to put a radio in the van.
4. Mark, KA2FBZ: Field Day - We will be holding field day this year but will monitor attendance. Discussion was later held regarding a test session during field day. Jim will let us know for sure once he lines up the VE's but it is very possible that we will be holding a test session on Saturday, June 25<sup>th</sup> at 1 PM at the Wilton Emergency Corp in conjunction with field day.
5. Darlene, N2XQG: Hamfest - Discussion was held regarding the radio for the hamfest. The radio we have purchased for the past few years has gone up almost \$400 from last year. We will decide on which radio to purchase at the next board meeting. People do not come for the main door prize since what we are giving is not publicized. Mailing to vendors new and old and to all publications has gone out.

6. Jim, K2LM: Packet antenna needs to be replaced. Total needed \$285. MSC to approve the purchase.
7. Peter KA2DHz: Peter will make an effort to attend different club meetings to try to promote the "speakers bureau" he is trying to start. It was decided to hold the next fox hunt on Saturday, May 7<sup>th</sup>.
9. Motion to adjourn Dave, N2FEP 2<sup>nd</sup> AI, KA1IEG 7:24 pm

Respectfully submitted,  
Darlene N2XQG  
Secretary Pro Tem

### CLUB MEETING

The evening's program was to be Steve W2FXJ with NY Army MARS, but due to the death of his brother, he was unable to attend. The speakers for the evening were Peter KA2DHz and Dave N2FEP discussing the fox hunt that was held last Saturday April 9<sup>th</sup>. Forms for participation needed to be filled out including vehicle information; this information is needed in case of a problem or an emergency. All participants were given a list of the rules which once sent to Darlene will be published on the web page at the request of Jim, KG2H. The first place finisher took 25 minutes, the last place finisher 1 hour 34 minutes. A picture of the first place participant will be on the web page thanks to Jim, K2LM. All participants had a great time and are looking forward to the next one. There was much discussion with the group and participants and it seemed to be a popular event, even though the attendance was low.

### UPCOMING HAMFEST

The Second Annual East Greenbush Hamfest will be held on **May 21** at the Phillips Road Firehouse in East Greenbush. Gates open at 8 a.m. and vendors can setup starting at 6am. VE exams will be held 9 am. Talk in frequency is 146.52 MHz. Info: KB2HWL@nycap.rr.com

### FIELD DAY

PLEASE save the dates of **June 25 and 26** this year for ARRL's Annual Field Day. We need help setting up, operating radio stations and take down. Please contact Mark Hansen and let him know how you can help. He can be reached via email at Mhansen4@nycap.rr.com.

### DUATHALON

On **May 29th** the Saratoga Lion's Club will be sponsoring a Duathalon. The event begins at 0830 at the Skidmore Campus and consist of running and biking events. There are 300 - 400 participants

expected. The Lion's organizing committee has requested the club to provide communications from around the course to the operations center. For this event we are going to need 4 or 5 amateur radio operators. We will most likely use 147.00 for communications. The event should be over well before noon. Interested in helping? Contact Lee - WB2NSC at 383.2677 or e-mail at lpalmer@capital.net.

### Tour du Cure 2005 Update

The 2005 American Diabetes Association Tour du Cure is scheduled for **June 12th**. This yearly event will host nearly 1,000 bike riders who will raise money by riding 10, 25, 50, and 100 mile treks. The Club members operate a base operations station and provide communications at water/rest stops, bike repair vehicles, and SAG wagons. The routes will remain primarily the same, however, with nearly 1,000 riders the Tour organizers have asked us to provide communications support for additional SAG wagons and bicycle repair vehicles. This means that we will need additional operators. If anyone is interested in helping all that is need is the interest. For more information contact Lee Palmer, WB2NSC at 518.383.2677 or e-mail at lpalmer@capital.net

### Radio Officer's Column



Spring has arrived and it looks like flooding potential is leaving us.

Please do not get complacent with the current nice break in the weather. Thunderstorms are still a real possibility and with them damaging rain, hail, and winds. Keep your weather spotter skills sharp for the coming

season. If your Skywarn certification has lapsed go to the NWS website and check when they will be running schools at the weather office. The 147.360 repeater has a weather radio alerting system on it and only activates for Warnings ( bad things are occurring ) in Saratoga , Montgomery, Schenectady, and Fulton counties ONLY. Give a listen in bad weather if you do not have a weather radio as it will rebroadcast the warnings as they are issued. Counties west of us usually get it first so that is why they are included so we get a heads up on the incoming weather. Please consider participating in field day this year at Wilton EMS on Jones Rd. It is on June 25 and 26 and we are also considering holding a test

session there on the 25th. Field day is a FUN ham radio day. We can learn much in the way of emergency communications and setups. We can test and try new ideas for antennas and setups that may or may not work but it is good to be prepared. I am planning in May to hold a training drill at Wilton to learn how to use our current radios. It should be fun for everyone. The last few drills have been very sparse in attendance and I'm concerned that members are not taking advantage of the training sessions. Please make it a point to attend those sessions. Drills give us good information and training and keep our skills sharp so we can assist in time of need. Saratoga County just received a 37 ft. motor coach emergency communications center completely self contained. There is room for amateur radio in it and I am currently setting that up with the county for all of us. I will keep you informed and we will have some training on that when the time comes.

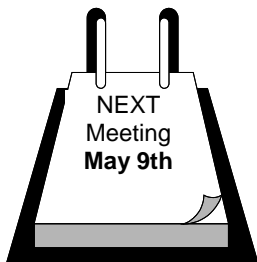
Be safe , Be prepared ,  
 Dave N2FEP  
 Radio Officer E/C

**NEXT RACES CLUB  
 MEETING MAY 9th**

The talk with be about the various aspects of **APRS** led by Dick W2GWY.

**\*\*\*\*NET on Sunday's  
 Every Week \*\*\*\***

The Saratoga County RACES Association will meet **EVERY SUNDAY NIGHT at 8:00 pm.** on 147.00 and 147.24. The goal of the net is to involve many of the ARES members in Saratoga County in a weekly net to help prepare people for work in an emergency situation.!



Dave N2FEP at the March Swapfest showing both the radio and cash he won!



The hamfest drew a good response and bargaining



The picture may be dark but here is KA2QYE, the foxhunt winner on April 9th!

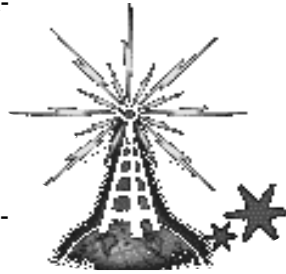
**SECRETARY'S NOTE**

Enclosed you will find the club membership roster as of March 31, 2005. If you find any errors please contact me via email. Also, thanks to all of you who expressed a willingness to receive the newsletter via email. Hopefully by June this project will be well underway.



### WA2UMX ON THE INTERNET

Kim Lake, KF2LV has set up a web page for the club. It is located at: <http://www.wa2umx.net>. The club operates two 2-meter repeaters. The 147.24 re-



peater is located 15 miles West of Saratoga Springs at Lake Nancy, in Barkersville. This repeater has a phone patch, which is restricted to members only. 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 clubs third repeater on 448.225 MHz.

Saratoga County ARES repeater at lake Nancy 147.360 is also supported by the club. Located in the Town of Providence.

## OFFICERS

President:  
Jim McKnight K2LM  
223 Homestead Road  
Schuylerville NY 12871  
695-6462

Radio Officer:  
Dave Atwell - N2FEP  
P.O. Box 41  
Rock City Falls, NY 12863  
882-6196  
datwell@nycap.rr.com

Vice President:  
Darlene Lake N2XQG  
314 Loudon Rd. Lot 84  
Saratoga Springs N.Y. 12866  
587-2385  
Dar@saratogaspringsny.us

Secretary & Newsletter Editor:  
Bill Henderson—N2OWA  
5 Springfield Drive  
Mechanicville NY 12118  
533-1511  
N2OWA@ARRL.net

Treasurer:  
Al Margadonna, KA1IEG  
P.O. Box 124  
Cambridge, NY 12816  
677-3316

KA1IEG63@aol.com

Sysop WA2UMX DX Cluster:  
Rich Casullo - WZ2D  
7 Crooked Street  
Charlton, NY 12019  
384-0836

Directors:  
Joanna Cummings  
114 Lake Nancy Road  
Middle Grove NY 12850  
n2qft@arrl.net

Mark Hansen - KA2FBZ  
430 Gansevoort Road  
Gansevoort, NY 12831  
587-8053  
Mhansen4@nycap.rr.com

Jim Polewczak KG2H  
40 Cook Circle  
Gansevoort, NY 12831  
695-6878  
KG2H@nycap.rr.com

Peter Dobo KA2DHz  
2132 East St.  
Galway NY 12074  
Waterwheel@peoplepc.com

Saratoga County R.A.C.E.S. Association, Inc.  
C/O Bill Henderson, Secretary  
5 Springfield Drive  
Mechanicville NY 12118

Presort Standard  
U.S. Postage  
**PAID**  
Permit No. 89  
Saratoga Springs, NY  
12866

