

Sparks from the Spa



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

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

In this newsletter you will find an article about the vast amount of amateur radio interests that have been created and are still maintained by YOUR club. Some of these, the 147.00 and then 147.24 repeaters, go back to the beginning of VHF repeaters in the Capital District. Others, like the 1.2 GHz beacon are a recent addition to the amazing amount of ham related devices that WE have on the air.

All of these creations come from the members of your club. They were built by them, and are still maintained by our membership.

Though I am certain to leave out someone, I would like to acknowledge and thank those present members who have created and maintained over the years our vast assortment of goodies. First and foremost K2DLL, who helped get the first 147.00 and then the 147.24 repeaters on the air. I hope that Ed might do a column telling of the early history of WA2UMX.

And to Francis, N1LJF, who helped for many years keep both repeaters on the air.

A big tip of the antenna to Dick, licensed as N2AYY and now has his dad's call of W2GWY, for designing and maintaining our packet network in the late 1980s that still stands and runs as the best in the Northeast. Dick continues to help not only with our packet network but also with our APRS system. He also maintains the packet system and APRS node, W2GWY, in Washington County. To Frank, KA2QYE, who I first met on a cold January day in the early 1990s when we climbed the Providence tower to move all our packet gear from a tower that had fallen to the Providence radio site. Frank

continues to be a great technical leader in our club. To Dave, N2FEP, who while changing out the 147.240 MHz repeater antenna at the 150+ foot level of the Providence tower, calmly said "I think we need to finish this job quickly as I can see lightning coming in fast from the west". We did and got down before the storm struck.. Dave continues to push our group to higher levels each year. To Steve, KC2IU, and Arnold, KA2APN, who years ago in a very cold and snowy rain climbed the tower holding the 147.00 antenna, to reattach the repeater feedline that was hanging in the breeze to the tower. When they came down they were so cold they could no longer grasp anything, much less a tower leg. (I would love to get my hands on the climber that just cut our feedline from the tower leg).

Then there is Rich, WZ2D, who is never seen but maintains without any fanfare our DXCluster and Echolink computer. Rich started this project in the early 1990s when the club bought a 486 computer to run the WA2UMX packet bulletin board. I also need to thank Glenn, KA2DTH, and Ryan, K2RRT, who have provided technical knowledge and support that has kept the WA2UMX systems on the air.

There are members like Joanna, N2QFT, Darlene, N2XQG, Lee, WB2NSC, and others that also need to be thanked but I will save that for another president's column.

Jim
K2LM

RACES/ARES TRAINING DAY
Saturday February 25
9:00 am at the Wilton EMS
Topic: The Radio Room and Training

**JANUARY CLUB MEETING:
WA2UMX Sponsored Radio Applications in
Saratoga County
By Jim K2LM**

**Voice repeaters
147.240 MHz**

In the western part of Saratoga County, on the county's Providence radio site, 43 06' 04" N, 74 02' 10" W, the club owns the 147.240 MHz repeater, which always sends 100 Hz CTCSS. The repeater normally runs in the "carrier squelch" mode but can quickly be placed into CTCSS mode by any control operator. If you have a newer radio, you should run your radio in tone encode/decode all the time.

The 24 repeater has a UHF link to the 147.00 MHz, which can be activated at any time by a control operator. The repeaters are automatically linked each Sunday night for the 8 pm net.

Because the repeater is located at one of the county radio sites, it has generator backup.

147.360 MHz

The club helps support the 147.360 MHz N2FEP repeater, which is maintained by Dave Atwell. N2FEP owns all the gear, including the Rohn tower which sits on the property of Joanna, N2QFT. The repeater has Echolink available all the time. If you have questions about Echolink or Dave's repeater, you can catch him on 36 or datwell@nycap.rr.com

147.00 MHz/ 448.225 MHz

Located at the county's Spruce Mountain radio site, 43 12' 58" N, 73 54' 22" W, in the eastern part of the county, is 147.00 MHz. Like 147.240 it generates a CTCSS of 100 Hz all the time. At present the repeater is running in CTCSS mode and requires a 100 Hz tone to access the repeater. The SCom 7K controller also runs the 448.225 MHz repeater, which is linked to 147.00 MHz all the time and requires a tone of 100 Hz. The 448.225 MHz repeater has no beep and a shot tail because it provides the link between 147.00 and 147.24. The site has generator backup.

Digital

Back in the late 1980s and into the early 1990s, the club built an extensive packet radio network to link with Plattsburgh on the north, Utica on the west, Poughkeepsie on the south, and Mount Greylock on the east. The club still maintains the userports and links, but other than the State Emergency Management Office in Albany there is almost no use of our packet system.

The WA2UMX network has a userport on 144.950 MHz, 1200 baud, on Spruce Mountain. Also at the site is a 448.125 MHz, 9600 baud digital repeater. The input is 443.125 MHz. Try listening to it on your UHF radio sometime! Another userport is located at the 147.240 MHz

site on the frequency on 145.010 MHz. With these userports you can access the WA2UMX DXCluster by connecting to a userport then c DXUMX, then c WA2UMX.

The Echolink and DXCluster computers are maintained by Rich, WZ2D, and are located at his QTH.

Our club also maintains an APRS digipeater on 144.390 MHz atop Spruce Mountain.

Weak Signal

Your club maintains three "beacons" on 144.290 MHz, 222.050 MHz, and 1.2963 GHz. They are located at the site of the 147.24 repeater and are keyed by the same keyer, which sends DE WA2UMX/B FN23XC at five words per minute over and over. Though these beacons might not be of great use to we local club members, they are used by weak signal hams in Pennsylvania, Canada, and New England. The 1.2 GHz beacon is even heard at Wilkes Barre, PA.

RADIO OFFICER REPORT

I hope everyone had a good holiday season. We canceled the net for the holidays and restarted it on the 8th of January to remind everyone of the club meeting that was on the 9th. I had asked a short time ago that members let me know what would be a good

training date. For example Saturday mornings or afternoons, Sunday am or pm, or another day so I could plan something. No one has given me any ideas on this. I would really like to run training but only if the members would like to attend such an event. Please contact me and let me



know. We will be doing some on the air training during the nets to ready ourselves for the upcoming events we provide communications for such as walkathons, tour de cure etc. Please try to attend and participate in the nets on Sunday nights for training. We want to be able to provide the best communications we can for these events. The net is on the air for about 10 to 15 minutes a week so that is not much time to devote to training for our service. Hope to see everyone at our next meeting

Dave N2FEP

Radio Officer Saratoga Co. R.A.C.E.S.

**February Club Meeting: February 13th
Wilton EMS, Jones Road**

Saratoga RACES Board Meeting

Date: January 9, 2006

Wilton EMS Building

1. Meeting was called to order by Secretary Bill N2OWA at 6:42 pm in the absence of other officers. There was a quorum present.
2. Board members present were: Jim, K2LM [late]; Al KA1IEG; Dave N2FEP; Bill N2OWA; Fred W2EMS; Joann N2QFT
3. Moved, seconded and carried to approve the minutes of the board for November 14, 2005.
4. Al KA1IEG gave the treasurer's report. Checking account balance: \$8,678.44 after expenses and dues collections. Moved, seconded and carried to receive the treasurer's report.
5. The Radio Officer, Dave, N2FEP, gave an updated report that all the repeaters are working, the Sunday evening net is back in operation and that some time will be spent with tactical call signs on the net in future nets. Dave will do training, but he needs more than 5 to do it.
6. It was noted that Jim KG2H cannot do a testing session at the March swapfest. A testing session needs to be done then. This is Darlene's responsibility.
7. Al discussed Field Day. Fred W2EMS volunteered to be the tactical and logistical assistant for Al KA1IEG, chair of the 2006 Field Day event.
8. Moved, seconded and carried to authorize the expenditure of up to \$750 for an antenna for the 147.36 repeater that Dave N2FEP is responsible for. The current antenna has reduced the range of the repeater. Once a new antenna is up the 36 repeater will be linked to the 00 and 24 repeaters and the 36 weather alert will be set up to broadcast on all the club's repeaters.
9. There was continuing discussion about the possibility of offering a study class for those interested in Extra class license
10. Moved, seconded and carried to adjourn at 7:05 pm.

Saratoga RACES Club Meeting

1. At 7:35 Jim K2LM called the meeting to order
2. Present: Jim, K2LM; Al KA1IEG; Bill N2OWA; Peter, KA2DHZ; Fred, W2EMS; Glen, KA2DTH; Bob, KA2TBB; Henry, KB2STR; Roger WA2FOX; Dick W2GWY; Dave KC2ODL; Tim N2MBX
3. The board officers reported on the actions taken and items reviewed at the board meeting.
4. The speaker for the evening was Jim K2LM who spoke about all the equipment WA2UMX owns and operates. A handout was made available [reprinted in the newsletter]; [picture of K2LM to right].
5. The meeting adjourned at 8:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Bill N2OWA Secretary

Field Day 2006

June 24 & 25

Although Field Day 2006 is still months away Field Day Chairman, Al Margadonna (KA1IEG) is beginning to assemble the committee needed to plan fun and exciting activities for June 24th-25th. The committee is still in its' formation stage so, if you would like to participate in the planning process, please contact Field Day Logistics Coordinator Fred Halley (W2EMS) or Chairman Al Margadonna (KA1IEG).

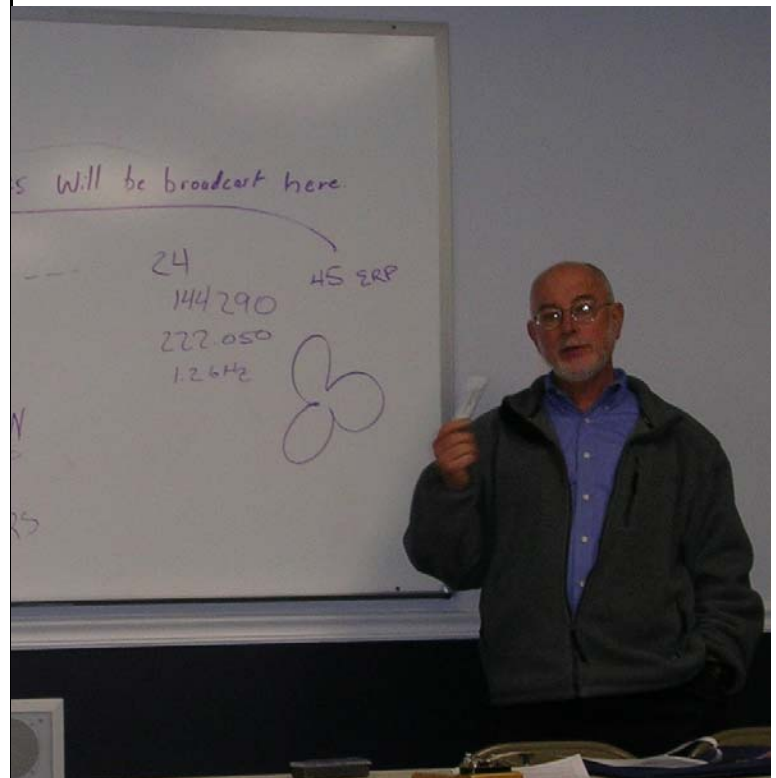
The goal of the 2006 Field Day committee is to give all club members an opportunity to participate in field day. There will be many tasks ranging from setup, station operation, public relations, food & drink coordination, contact logging, teardown, and wrap-up. All club members are encouraged to participate in **Field Day 2006**

N2FEP Hats & Shirts

Call sign hats with your call sign or 1st name and call \$8.00

T-shirt with your call sign and name on the front pocket area \$ 10.00

Contact: N2FEP at datwell@nycap.rr.com anytime. We will be at the March Swapfest

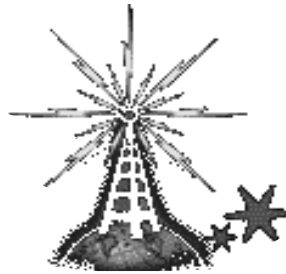




WA2UMX ON THE INTERNET
 Kim Lake, KF2LV has set up a web page for the club. It is located at:
<http://www.wa2umx.net>.

CLUB REPEATERS

The club operates two 2-meter repeaters. The 147.24 repeater 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.

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