



# Sparks from the Spa



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

## PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

"Never assume nothing" -- Anon

Most of you know that I like fixing things. I have always thought that I had some basic technical knowledge about VHF radios, cable, and antennas.

My job at our 20th hamfest was to setup the talk-in station and be the early talk-in person. I grabbed some RG-8X with PL259s, a Larsen ground plane antenna that said "150 MHz" on it, a Yaesu mobile and a 35amp Astron power supply from the club shack at the Wilton Emergency Corp.

I took along to the fairgrounds, some tape, ty-wraps, and a simple meter. I put the station on the air Friday afternoon, did a quick radio check and went home.

On Saturday some stations that I was trying to direct into the fairgrounds said "my audio was horrible and distorted". I just figured that they were in a bad spot or just being picky.

After a beautiful hamfest, I took the station down and brought it home. As I was coiling up the RG-8X, one of the PL259s fell off. I gave a gentle tug on the other connector and it came off. I decided that I had better look at the antenna. I then took my MFJ-269 antenna analyzer and checked the VSWR of the antenna. It was 10:1 everywhere in the band !!

OK, maybe that picky ham was right. With bad connectors on the RG-8X and an antenna that had no match, it is amazing that any RF fell out the end of the antenna.

I repaired the RG-8X and made the Larsen radiator the correct length so that the VSWR was

1:1.5 across the two meter band. I then returned the gear to the club shack and remembered what my old college physics professor once said, " what do you have when you remove u and me from assume? "

Jim  
K2LM

## PC MAGAZINE RECOGNIZES HAMS [Found by the Editor during a late night magazine read]

In John C. Dvorak's popular Column, *Inside Track* in the November 8th issue of *PC Magazine*, he writes about the effects of Hurricane Katrina, and says: 'the most overlooked participants in the Katrina relief effort were **ham radio folks**, who were doing whatever they could as ad hoc emergency dispatchers, creating their own network within the system. These dedicated persons pride themselves on their ability to do worldwide communications under adverse conditions, and the ARRL and its members, as well as others, were a big part of the relief effort. Of course since amateur radio is anything but trendy in today's Xbox, gene-splicing world, there was zero coverage of its contribution in the mainstream press, and these people are not the world's greatest self-promoters. At least some of us are paying attention. **Good work, guys!** Bush should be giving medals to you all."

## HAMS HELP AT DUATHALON By Fred W2EMS

This was the first time Saratoga RACES helped with this event and it seemed like we were a big hit. Everyone I talked with thought we had a well run operation. I'm sure the Duathlon will be a regular public service event each year. We had a great turnout of hams for the event. I was hoping for 6 and really only expected 4 but we ended up with EIGHT from 8AM until about 11AM.!! Plus, I had contacted NEMSAR (North East Mobile Search and Rescue) who brought their converted ambulance that we used at our ECOM center.

The following operators were present:

Fred W2EMS  
Dave N2FEP  
Bill N2OWA  
Bob KB2TBB  
Glenn KA2DTH  
Tom N2SBC  
Tim N2MBX  
Henry KB2STR

### Saratoga RACES Board Meeting

Date: October 10, 2005  
Wilton EMS Building

1. Meeting was called to order by President Jim K2LM at 6:55 pm
2. Board members present were: Darlene, N2XQG, Jim, K2LM; Mark, KA2FBZ; Al, KA1IEG; and Peter, KA2DHZ. Guest: Stormy, N2VLS
3. MSC to approve the board minutes of September 12, 2005 that were previously distributed.
4. Al KA1IEG gave the treasurer's report. Beginning balance of \$8931.84; after expenses, remaining balance of \$8769). The board voted to send checks to the fairgrounds for next years hamfest (\$375) and to pay our yearly insurance bill (\$325).
5. Mark, KA2FBZ brought in the PL259's for the radio room.
6. Peter, KA2DHZ indicated he was having problems making meetings due to other commitments.
7. The meeting was adjourned at 7:25 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Darlene N2XQG

## Saratoga RACES Club Meeting

October 10, 2005  
Wilton EMS Building

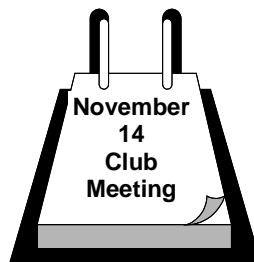
1. At 7:30 the meeting was called to order.
2. Present: Darlene, N2XQG, Jim, K2LM; Mark, KA2FBZ; Al, KA1IEG; Stormy, N2VLS and Peter, KA2DHZ; Donn, KF2AB; Fred, W2EMS; Glen, KA2DTH; Francis, W2LJF; Bob, KA2TBB; Henry, KB2STR; Steven, K2WE; Dave, KC2NXD; Matthew, N2MBB; Steve, KC2ABA and Barry, KB2UXQ.
3. Treasurers report given
4. Fred W2EMS gave a report on the Halfmoon Duathlon.
5. Donn, KF2AB talked about the Apple run that will be held in Burnt Hills on Saturday October 22. He will need a couple more volunteers for this - if you can help contact Donn at 371-4270 or email dslocum@nycap.rr.com
6. The speaker for the evening was Matthew, N2MBB with NEMSAR. They brought in 2 vehicles for the group to tour. They have an excellent website: <http://nemsar.org>

### FOR SALE

Pentium MMX PC, 128M RAM, 4 GB HD, CD, CDRW, Floppy, 56K Modem, Windows 98 OS, Microsoft Office, Monitor, keyboard, mouse & more. Contact Glenn NA2Z, 747-3194 or [jmc504@capital.net](mailto:jmc504@capital.net) Asking \$100

### NEXT CLUB MEETING

The topic of our next meeting will be ALE. ALE is the humorous acronym for the lofty-sounding *Automatic Link Establishment*. With the capability to call up a specific station, a group of stations, a net... or just CQ, ALE is a versatile system for connecting operators for voice, data, text, instant messaging, or image QSOs. A radio operator initiating a call, can within minutes have the ALE automatically pick a frequency that has a good propagation path. It signals the operators on both ends, so they can begin communicating with each other immediately. Come learn more about this fascinating field!



## RADIO OFFICER REPORT

I hope everyone has had a good summer as the warm weather seems to have come to an end



and colder temperatures are with us. I hope you all got your antenna work done and all is ready for the times ahead. We were lucky this last rain event that not much flooding occurred in the area; many

others in the northeast were not so lucky. Please keep ready so you can assist when needed. The new emergency director will be appointed after the new year. I am hopeful that this person will be amateur radio friendly. I will do my best to move us forward to provide emergency communications to the county. With that said, I hope and pray that I will have all of your support in that endeavor. I will be going over the RACES membership list [not the Club membership list] to contact everyone and see if you still intend to be available for emergency help. Please be ready to say 'yes' and that you will be available and ready to go when asked. If you cannot make this kind of commitment please say so when you are asked. I need a number of qualified and ready members of RACES, not just a list of names on paper. Till next time,

Dave N2FEP  
Radio Officer  
Saratoga County RACES

## A.R.E.S. EMERGENCY COORDINATOR REPORT

The Sunday evening net is back in full swing at 8:00 pm on the 147.00 and 147.24 linked repeaters. We have had good sessions so far and will continue our weekly net until after the June Club meeting. I want to thank Fred W2EMS and Bill N2OWA for their assistance in running the weekly nets. The net is a training session for all operators that participate each week. We need

more net control operators to join the training. Please consider taking one week to try it out. No one will be laughed at or pointed out for their mistakes; this is so that we can ALL be prepared for emergency communications when the need arises. And that day WILL come. The net info is on the club webpage at [www.wa2umx.net](http://www.wa2umx.net) so you read it and practice it. That way you can be ready to run the net. If more operators do not pitch in to run the net or participate in the net, then the net will go off the air due to lack of concern by the members. We average 10 check-ins each Sunday, including net control, which is a far cry from the 50 members on the ARES/RACES rosters. We all need to be prepared and practice. The net itself just takes a few minutes. If you think a better time or day would be better for the net, just let me know by a phone call or email. The SET [Simulated Emergency Test] was not run this year as there were not enough participants. This is a national exercise for preparedness and emergency communications and we receive points for our efforts [not to mention the notes in *QST*. This is good training for all of us. There is still time to run a SET in November but it will take more than 10 members to come and do it. Without these drills, I cannot present to our served agencies that we can provide emergency communications because we drill and because we have enough people participating and willing to help in a real emergency. To serve in a real crisis you must first spend time training. Otherwise you can't get the job done. More members need to participate. If not I can only assume that we cannot provide emergency communications service in a crisis. That means letting the Red Cross and Office of Emergency Services that we cannot help them. As long as you are on the RACES/ARES roster I ASSUME you are ready and willing to be trained as well as be available in an emergency. If you don't have time to train, please let me know and I will remove your name from the list. What we need are qualified and trained members— nothing less will do. See you all on the Sunday evening net.

N2FEP Dave  
Emergency Coordinator Saratoga county ARES

## Some duathlon pictures



## LEARN MORSE CODE

I decided to make a contribution to the continued use of Morse code, and have created a computer program that makes it easy to learn the code. The program can be downloaded from <http://justlearnmorsecode.com>

73 de LB3KB, Sigurd



Sign in by hams working the event

## SILENT KEY

Robert R. Daigneault, 74, died at his residence in Cohoes October 10, 2005, surrounded by his loving family after a brief illness. After serving his country in the U.S. Air Force, he selflessly dedicated himself to provide emergency services through his extensive knowledge of radio communication. He was a licensed amateur radio operator for 40 years, having a call sign of WB2ZCM. He was a member of the Albany Amateur Radio Association, ARRL member and belonged to Albany County RACES.



**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.

**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

Nm31442@capital.net

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

Glenn Burt  
 4 Glenwood Drive  
 Saratoga Springs NY 12866  
 587-7745  
 KA2DTH@arrl.net

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

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 U.S. Postage  
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