



THE WECAGRAM



Newsletter of the

Westchester Emergency Communications Association, Inc.

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Serving the Public through Amateur Radio and serving Amateurs since 1972

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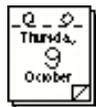


Next Meeting

The next WECA meeting will be held on Monday, October 6, 1997 at the Westchester County Center in White Plains, beginning at 7:30 p.m. with a social half-hour followed by the main program at 8 p.m.

This month's speaker will be Stephen Mendelsohn, W2ML ("Marathon Leader"), First Vice President of the ARRL. He will discuss the upcoming New York City Marathon. He will also bring news of the latest league happenings.

Meetings are open to all--bring a friend! If you need directions, ask on the 2m repeater .



License Examinations

The next WECA sponsored ARRL VE session will be on Thursday, October 9, 1997 at 7 p.m. at the EOC (Emergency Operations Center) in the County Office Building, sub-basement EOC/ODES office (Office of Disaster and Emergency Services), 148 Martine Avenue, in White Plains, NY (across from

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The Galleria). For information contact Sandy Fried, N2SF, during regular business hours at 914-285-3029.



Weekend Technician Class (No-Code) Amateur Radio Course

On Saturday and Sunday, October 25 and 26, from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., the Westchester Emergency Communications Association will be offering a no-code technician course at the American Red Cross, 106 N. Broadway, White Plains, NY. At the end of the course, a license examination session will be offered.

All prospective hams *must* pre-register. Workbook, materials, and lunch will be provided for a cost of \$40. (Plus \$6.25 license examination fee.) The course and exams are open to the public.

Applications are available by email, phone, web, fax, or mail:

Contact: Darlana D. Mayo, N2DB

582 E. Third St.

Mt. Vernon, NY 10553-1802

Phone: 914-699-4191

Fax: 914-699-5711

Email: n2db@weca.org

Web: <http://www.weca.org>

From the Editor

This month we continue the series on homebrew projects by going over some component identification basics from Harry Lythall, SM0VPO. Alan, N2YGK, reviews the newest Radio Shack weather radio, and Bob, KB2WQB, reviews the book *Radio Voices: American Broadcasting, 1922-1952* by Michele Hilmes.

The area's major public service event, the New York City Marathon, is coming up in November. As usual, Steve Mendelsohn, W2ML ("Marathon Leader"), will be at the October WECA meeting to solicit volunteers as well as discuss recent happenings in the world of amateur radio. Hope you can all make it to the meeting.

73,

Test Your RF Safety Knowledge

N0D07 Which of the following instruments might you use to measure the RF radiation exposure levels in the vicinity of your station?

A. A calibrated field strength meter with a calibrated field strength sensor

B. A calibrated in-line wattmeter with a calibrated length of feed line

Quote of the Month

"You can walk on the noise floor up at the jail."

--Tom Raffaelli, WB2NHC, at the September Meeting, in reference to the main repeater site.

Book Review: *Radio Voices* by Michele Hilmes

Reviewed by Bob Schore, KB2WQB

Copyright 1997, Bob Schore, 1997

Radio Voices: American Broadcasting, 1922-1952

by Michele Hilmes,

University of Minnesota Press, 1997.

ISBN: 0816626200 (Hardcover), 0816626219 (Paperback). 320 pages.

This fascinating book documents the "heyday" of broadcast radio from 1922 to 1952. The author is less concerned with the technical aspects of radio, but sees broadcast radio as the major cultural influence on the country for three decades. Radio particularly encouraged women and minorities to play important roles. What is amazing in this book is that the author gives vivid expression to the comedy, variety, music and dramas of broadcast radio of the time, although she herself grew up at a time when radio had already become the fortress of "top 40" and "rock and roll."

The book presents amateur radio for the most part in a very favorable light. The author consulted with the ARRL and old issues of QST. She writes, "the importance of amateurs in the development of American radio can hardly be overstated...they had considerable influence on the 'social construction' of radio, including such concrete elements as technology and regulation. In the years immediately preceding and following World War I, theirs were the dominant voices on the air, and theirs the dominant role in developing uses and applications for this new medium."

In the earliest days, all stations were experimental and there was no clear demarcation between amateur and commercial radio. Amateurs advocated a model of broadcasting that would have allowed free access to the spectrum, and a much more even balance of power. They conceived an idea that every radio receiver could also be licensed as a transmitter, and indeed until 1922 amateurs broadcast concerts, sport events, read poetry, played records and flooded the limited band space available. Women readily came into amateur radio, since CW was the prevalent mode and one's gender did not have to be revealed. However, most amateurs just gave their call letters, location, and description of the apparatus they were using and how they configured it. Sounds familiar?

By 1920, commercial radio was allowed about four frequencies and were supposed to make use of shared time arrangements. "The amateurs lobbied hard for an organized assignment system that still

would have preserved a more 'democratic' model of access to the air. Band jumping, power blasting, and outright frequency grabbing were far more characteristic of commercial broadcasting...than amateur..." However, commercial interests began to see radio as an advertising and profit making medium and their stronger influences prevailed. Sounds familiar again?

This is an interesting and recommended book. The references to amateur radio are brief, but shed some light to the precedents of spectrum grabbing by other interests.

Thanks

by Tom Raffaelli, WB2NHC

Thanks to everyone who helped at Summer WECAFEST. Attendance was down but a great time was had by all who attended. Thanks again for another great WECA caliber function.



JOTA

by Tom Raffaelli, WB2NHC

The Boy Scouts have again asked us to participate in the annual Jamboree On The Air (JOTA) weekend. We have been asked to bring the Comm Van to Croton Point Park on Saturday, October 18, 1997. We will arrive between 9 a.m. and 10 a.m., to set up HF and VHF stations. We will work other JOTA stations and conduct tours of the stations for the scouts from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m.

If you would like to participate, please contact me at wb2nhc@weca.org or call 914-769-1486.



Turkey Trot

by Robert Kantor, N2TSE

The annual Mamaroneck Turkey Trot will be held on Sunday, November 23 at Harbor Island. WECA will provide communications support. Volunteers can meet for breakfast at McDonald's from 7 a.m. to 8 a.m. or at the event at 8 a.m. The event should be over by 11:30 a.m.

If you'd like to volunteer or need more information, please call me at 914-949-4231, or catch me on the 2m repeater.

A Review of the Radio Shack 7-channel Weatheradio with NWS-SAME Alert

by Alan Crosswell, N2YGK

I bought the new Radio Shack WX radio (120-0249) that uses the National Weather Service's Specific Area Message Encoding system (NWS-SAME). In order to set it up, you have to know your Federal

Information Processing Standards (FIPS) codes for state and county. To find these, the Radio Shack manual says to call your store or the Commerce Department! You can instead find them at <http://www.weca.org/skyfips.html> or at the NWS site (<http://www.nws.bnl.gov/>) or Radio Shack's own technical support site (<http://www.radioshack.com/Support>). In short, Westchester County's code is 036119.

What is the SAME and how is it different?

SAME is the NWS's implementation of the new Emergency Alert System (EAS; FCC Part 11) which replaces the Emergency Broadcast System ("Had this been a real emergency..."). The old EBS system used a lengthy dual-tone alert followed by a voice announcement. You've undoubtedly heard these annoying tones in the past while listening to your broadcast radio and probably switched it off before the "this is only a test" message even started.

Recently you may have noticed the new EAS tests instead. These sound like packet or a computer modem. That's because they are! EAS uses 520.83 baud audio frequency shift keying (AFSK). This is just like RTTY, packet and 1200 baud telephone modems use, but with different frequencies for the mark and space tones.

The AFSK tones encode ASCII data in a specific format consisting of header, body, and trailer messages. Within the header, generic information is encoded, such as:

affected area(s), encoded down to the county-subdivision level.

start and end times for the advisory.

precedence of the message (e.g. test, national emergency, etc.)

type of message (weather, civil emergency, HAZMAT emergency, etc.)

Between the header and trailer, other ASCII text and/or audio is supplied that supplements the generic information from the header with any necessary added details. The ASCII text can be used by broadcast and cable TV stations for the text scrawl along the bottom of the screen for example. The audio can be used by radio stations, with the option of automatically break

ing in to their program audio.

This same EAS technology has been adopted by the National Weather Service. They call it Specific Area Message Encoding (SAME). The old 1050 Hz alert tone is still there on 162.55 MHz but is now preceded by an EAS header (braaap braaap braaap).

An example of the use of SAME is that NWS can now issue Tornado warnings for a specific area of a county which can be automatically rebroadcast by commercial radio, television, and cable systems without causing unnecessary alerting of areas within their radio coverage area (NY, NJ, CT) that are not endangered.

So What About the WX Radio?



Photo: N2YGK

This \$79 Radio Shack WX radio has an EAS decoder built in, geared for reception and decode of NWS SAME transmissions. I also own the older weather alert radio which I suspect many people do, so I will compare some of the features:

Old: Tone alert sets off a siren for the duration of the alert. It falses on noise and makes little squawking sounds every now and then. When the siren goes off, an LED starts flashing until you hit the button to hear the weather audio--even if the alarm was many hours ago.

There is one tone alert for the entire OKX coverage area. During heavy rains we all get to hear about the Raritan River flooding in New Jersey (it always floods) even if there's nothing going on in our neck of the woods.

The siren volume is fixed at one setting (LOUD).

New: The EAS header sets off either a siren or beeps depending on the severity of the message and only if it is encoded with one of the fifteen (or fewer) county codes that you have programmed in to your radio via the keypad. This means you can listen for up to 15 counties, or just pick Westchester (and perhaps our immediate neighbors). It displays a scrolling LCD text message describing the nature of the alert. Last week mine alarmed, turned on the red LED and displayed "SEVERE THUNDRSTRM WARNING."

The new radio illuminates a green, yellow, or red LED which indicates Advisory, Watch, or Warning. It opens the audio squelch for 5 minutes so you can hear the voice message without having to get off the couch and run over to the radio. It also asserts 7.5VDC on an external device control connection if you want to hook some other gadget to it. The LEDs and the scrolling LCD message stay there until the alert period is over. So if you missed the initial alert but it is still in effect, you will still find out.

The siren has a volume control, there's an external antenna jack, and the aforementioned external device control. It also has an optional wall mounting bracket and some other minor options that are settable from the keypad. If you are concerned that it's not working, do not fear: if the radio doesn't hear the Required Weekly Test transmission (Wednesday mornings) or any other SAME transmissions for a week, the display flashes "CHECK OP."

All in all, quite a nice improvement over the old model. Kudos to the NWS for implementing SAME and to Radio Shack for a feature-rich weather radio.



Are You SET Oct. 4th and 5th?

by Alan Crosswell, N2YGG

The weekend of October 4th and 5th is the annual ARRL Simulated Emergency Test (SET). The SET is a nationwide test of the Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES), Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service (RACES), and the National Traffic System (NTS). (See <http://www.arrl.org/field/pscm/sec1-ch2.html>.) Local ARES/RACES groups frequently run drills in conjunction with their served agencies during the SET weekend, sometimes combined with ARRL section, division, area and nationwide activities. In cooperation with these groups the NTS is stress-tested by carrying as much traffic as possible.

In Westchester County we have received strong support from Liam Murphy, Director of the Office of Disaster and Emergency Services, and many "served agencies" to try and make the SET a realistic test of actual disaster communications we would be called upon to provide. Several agencies have used the SET weekend drill toward fulfillment of their requirements for tests of their emergency preparedness--so it is not "just" an Amateur Radio drill.

What can you do to prepare for this year's SET?

Try to keep the October 4-5 weekend open. Hang around the house and do some antenna work before it gets too cold.

Make sure you have a current copy of the ARES/RACES roster and know how to use it. Look it over for errors in your and your friends' listings and let me know about them!

Note: the ARES/RACES roster is not the WECA roster; ARES/RACES membership is voluntary and open to all hams, but you must apply separately--you are not automatically in ARES/RACES by joining WECA or any of the other area clubs.

Review your "jump bag" checklist and make sure everything on the list is in the bag or ready to be put there.

Check out your portable packet radio equipment. Make sure you've got all the cables, connectors, software, etc. to run your computer from a field location, preferably with a means of printing out messages to hand to agency representatives.

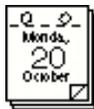
If you are an NTS traffic handler, or are interested in becoming one, review NTS traffic-handling procedures and generate some traffic just for fun. Suggestions: Greetings to family, friends, your EC (me), DEC (Joe Bruno, WB2VVS), SEC (Tony Pazzola, WB2BEJ), SM (Rob Leiden, KR2L) and so on.

Plan on checking in to as many NTS nets as you can make (don't be surprised to see extra unscheduled net sessions popping up).

Do it on emergency power! Roll that old generator out of the tool shed, change the oil and sparkplugs, and run it for a few hours. Apologize to your neighbors for the noise but explain it's an emergency preparedness test. Make sure you know your local noise ordinance! When you check in to NTS nets make sure you tell the NCS you are on emergency power.

Charge up your batteries. Pick up some spares.

Plan on having fun!



Next Board Meeting

The next WECA board meeting will be on Monday, October 20, at 8 p.m. at the EOC (148 Martine Avenue) in White Plains, NY. Meetings are open to all WECA members.

August Board Meeting Minutes

by **Anthony Licata, N2NWZ**

In attendance were N2s NWZ, DB, QZB, TSE, FMC, TJE, YGK, AMP, FXU, N4OOX, KB2NBN, KG2KO, WB2NHC, and WA2NRV.

Meeting called to order at 8:10 p.m. on August 25, 1997 by President Joe Brown, KB2NBN.

Andy, N4OOX, handed out the latest budget report. The budget is stable with money coming in from membership renewal.

Tom, WB2NHC, talked about final preparations needed for Summer WECAFEST at Yonkers Raceway.

Ron, N2TJE, reports that he sent a get well card to Bob, WB2LNB.

Darlana, N2DB, reports setting up a no-code technician course for October 25 and 26 at the Red Cross. A minimum of ten students are needed to hold the class. There will be one charge for all expenses, materials and lunch, except for the VE exam at the end of the session. Pre-registration will be required. There will soon be a planning meeting with instructors to work out all the final details.

Bob, N2DVQ, reports that the Sound Shore remote has been installed, but not yet operational until a new voter is installed. Could use remote if needed but would have to take one of the other remotes offline. He's also looking into a new controller since we cannot get any technical support any more for the old one. He would bench test all equipment before installing them at the site.

Peter, N2TFC, reports all renewal forms have been sent out, and that he's getting responses back. Will send out postcards to remind people who are late.

Bill, N2QZB, reports that all media have been notified about WECAFEST.

Robert, N2TSE, reports that the next public service event is the Turkey Trot on November 23.

Dwight, N2FMC, asked that when there is jamming on the repeater that nobody should say anything about it on the air. He reports that we have had problems with autopatch twits, and that there will be new codes soon.

Alan, N2YGK, said there will be a Simulated Emergency Test exercise on October 4 or 5.

Tom, WB2NHC, reports that AES is having a year-long program where a club can receive 1% credit on purchases when a club collects copies of sales receipts of member purchases. He will write an article to explain full details [see the September WECAGRAM]. He also reports that the Red Cross has installed new springs in the Comm Van to make the van level. This makes driving it easier and will prevent the A/C from leaking. Also, a leak was fixed, and the van received a tune-up. Now need to hook up phones inside the van and look into installing radios.

Joe, KB2NBN, reports receiving a request for communications support at an event at St. Joseph's Seminary in Yonkers. He will contact YARC about the event, for possible joint participation.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:45 p.m.

September Meeting Minutes

by **Anthony Licata, N2NWZ**

Meeting called to order at 8:06 p.m. on September 9 by President Joe Brown, KB2NBN. Joe announced that he will not be running again for President when his term is up. Joe also thanked the WECA members who worked on a joint public service event with YARC members at an event at St. Joseph's Seminary in Yonkers.

Robert, N2TSE, gave out Certificates of Appreciation from Westchester County to all the people who worked at the Philharmonic Concert in July. Robert also gave out WECA Certificates of Appreciation to the members who participated in 50% or more of the public service events. They are N2TWN, N2FMC, N2TJE, N2MEF, N2SF, N2YYL, N2UXJ, N2DVQ, N2QZB, N2AMP, N2NWZ, N2TFC, N2YGK, N2ZRC, KB2NBN, KB2SPA, WA2KHR, WA2NRV, WB2NHC, and WB2LNB. Russ, N2AMP, worked all 6 events. Robert also gave out fanny packs to the 13 members who went to the MS bike tour in Sullivan County the previous weekend.

Darlana, N2DB, spoke about the upcoming WECA no-code technician course.

Joe announced that Bob, WA2KHR, is leaving the country for a while to work in Paris and other places in Europe. As a gift WECA bought Bob a handheld pocket translator.

Tom, WB2NHC, talked about WECA Summerfest on Sept. 14 and gave out assignments to people. He also mentioned that he had gotten a request to give Ham Radio demonstrations to Boy Scouts on October 18 for their Jamboree up at Croton Point Park. Like last year he will bring the Comm Van and needs volunteers to help.

Gene, AA9LA, asked if the repeater passes PL tone. Dwight, N2FMC, said that the repeater passes PL tones that it receives. He was then asked if the repeater could be made to only pass 114.8. Discussion about PL tones on repeater will be on the agenda at the next board meeting.

Shirley, N2SKP, reports that the QSY Society is having a ham class on the weekends of September 16 and 23. People should contact Shirley for more information.

Vice President Dave Weiss, N2OGK introduced Detective Stu Goldstein from the New York City Mayor's Office of Emergency Management. Stu talked about his office's response to the World Trade

Center bombing. His office was notified three minutes after the explosion that some disaster had occurred. He showed a video and slide presentation of all the agency's responses. NYC uses 800 MHz alert frequency for all interagency communications. He also showed the setup and use of the communications van. He pointed out that cell phones don't work because everybody uses them which clogs communications down. He described lessons learned from the disaster and how try to improve things for the next time, they would use satellite phones and expand the use of 800 MHz to any agency or county (like Westchester) that might be involved with NYC in a disaster.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:13 p.m.

Component Identification (Part 1)

<http://hem2.passagen.se/sm0vpo/begin/componen.htm>

Latest Call Signs

As of September 18, 1997, the following call signs have been allocated in the "2" call district:

- Group A (Extra) AB2EG
- Group B (Advanced) KG2MN
- Group C (none left)

Group D (General/Tech/Novice) KC2CKH

October 1997

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
28	29	30	1 ● NM	2 Rosh Hashanah	3	4 ARRL SET CA QSO
5 YARC VE Session ARRL SET CA QSO	6 WECA Meeting	7	8 YLRL (CW)	9 ● FQ WECA VE Session YLRL (CW)	10 Ten-Ten Sprint YLRL (CW)	11 FISTS Fall Sprint PA QSO Yom Kippur
12 FISTS Fall Sprint PA QSO Columbus Day	13 Columbus Day (Observed)	14	15	16 ○ FM	17	18 IOTA IL QSO
19 IL QSO	20 WECA Board Meeting	21	22 YLRL (Phone)	23 ● LQ YLRL (Phone)	24 YLRL (Phone) United Nations Day	25 WECA Amateur Radio Course
26 DST ends WECA Amateur Radio Course	27	28	29	30	31 ● NM Boo! Halloween	1