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THE WECAGRAM



Newsletter of the

Westchester Emergency Communications Association, Inc.

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

Serving the Public through Amateur Radio and serving Amateurs since 1972

Volume 23, Issue 4 April 1999

Next Meeting

The next WECA meeting will be on Monday, April 12th, 1999 at the Westchester County Center in White Plains, beginning at 7:30pm with a social half hour followed by the main presentation at 8pm.

The main speaker is Steve Weinstein, K2WE, and he will discuss his trip to Vietnam.

1999 Young Ham of the Year

***** From "The ARRL Letter" March 5:**

Nominations are due May 30, for the Amateur Radio Newsline 1999 Young Ham of the Year (YHOTY). Now in its second decade, the YHOTY award goes each year to a US amateur 18 or younger who has used amateur radio to significantly contribute to the benefit of the hobby, to the state of the communications art, to the community or to the nation.

To obtain an official application, send an SASE to 1999 Young Ham of the Year Award, Newsline, 28197 Robin Ave, Santa Clarita, CA 91350.

Nomination applications also are available at <http://www.arnewsline.org>.

The award presentation is scheduled take place at the 1999 Huntsville Hamfest in August. The 1999 Young Ham of the Year also will spend a week at Spacecamp in Huntsville.

Newsline editor Bill Pasternak, WA6ITF, says the purpose of the YHOTY Award is "to highlight the accomplishments of the nation's many young radio hobbyists, and to encourage the entry of more young people into the exciting and rewarding hobby of Amateur Radio." Corporate sponsors include Yaesu USA and CQ magazine. The 1998 YHOTY was Richard Paczkowski Jr, KF4BIA, of Edgewater, Florida. -- Bill Pasternak, WA6ITF

From the Editor

With this months WECAGram brings the start of a busy time for us Hams. The spring has brought open bands on HF, that people talk about during the morning rush. It has also brought a snowless WECAfest, which brought us large crowds. The spring also brings the start of public service, with a couple of events this month. With all that Ham Radio has to offer, now is the time to take advantage of these opportunities. I hope to here you on the bands, and hope to see you at the public service events. If you haven't tried before, give it a shot. You might even have fun.

With that, its on to the news...
Your Editor, Will N2UXJ

Public Service

By Robert Kantor, N2TSE

Mark your calendar for these up-coming events. And if you want to volunteer, you can sign up at the membership meeting or you can contact me on the radio during SDN, or by phone at home.

Sunday April 18,
Multiple Sclerosis Walkathon at Rye Playland.

Sunday April 25,
March of Dimes Walkathon at Mt. Kisco

June 13,
American Diabetes Association Bike Tour at SUNY Purchase

Please watch this space in the future for details.

NOTE:

The NY Philharmonic Concert at WCC is tentatively scheduled for Saturday, July 24, 1999.

Febuary Board Meeting

By Kenneth F. Gross, N2OBY

In Attendance:

N2OBY, N2OGK, N2TSE, N2UXJ, N2SF, N2FMC, N2DVQ, N2DHH, N2TJE, WA2NRV, KB2MGM, N2EJI

On Monday the 22nd at 8:20 p.m. the meeting called to order by Dave Weiss, N2OGK.

Agenda Items:

Sandy, N2SF - Announced the upcoming National Weather Service drills on 3/23 & 3/25. The drills will be comprised of a Flash Flood Warning and a Tornado Warning. All amateurs are encouraged to listen for the drills.

Robert, N2TSE - Brought in samples of the new participation awards previously approved by the Board.

Stan, WA2NRV - Chairman of the Nominating Committee, He expressed the

committee's desire to see at least two candidates for each position in the upcoming elections.

Stan also put forth the idea of a "Loan Program," whereby older HF equipment would be loaned to interested, active club members who are looking to upgrade their license and desire an exposure to HF operating.

A discussion followed regarding possible available equipment and policies regarding the program.

Bob, N2DVQ - Discussed recent complaints regarding the 440 MHz repeater dropping out. Negotiations are currently underway to purchase a 250-watt unit to replace the current 65-watt machine. The new unit will become the primary repeater, with the current machine becoming the secondary..

Directors Reports:

Director-at-Large - Ron Devenuti, N2TJE: Reported sending a sympathy card on behalf of WECA to N2RIY for a death in the family. He in turn had received a "Thank You" note from the family.

WECAGRAM Editor - Will Austen, N2UXJ: Reminded everyone that the deadline date for WECAGRAM submissions has been moved to the third Monday of every month.

Public Service - Robert Kantor, N2TSE: Reported that he, along with WB2NHC & N2FMC had hosted some Cub Scouts at the Red Cross in White Plains, demonstrating amateur radio to the scouts.

Other Business: =20

Liam Murphy, Director - Westchester County ODES - Announced that the State Emergency Management Office (SEMO) is planning to hold an "Exercise Development" training course at the Joint News Center (County Airport) on 4/6-4/8. A minimum of 16 participants will be required for the class, with a maximum of 30. The course is designed to teach Disaster Preparedness personnel how to set up and run drills and exercises. There is no charge for the three-day course, with meals provided.

8:59 pm Motion to adjourn by Ken, N2OBY. 2nd by Will,N2UXJ.

March Member Meeting

By Kenneth F. Gross, N2OBY

On the 8th at 8:09 p.m. - Meeting called to order by Joe Brown, KB2NBN

Business -Joe Brown, KB2NBN: Reminded everyone that the nominating committee (comprised of Stan, WA2NRV (Chairperson); Jim, N2WQG and Mal, N2MEF) is looking for candidates for the following positions :President, Executive Vice-President, Vice President/General Counsel, Treasurer & Secretary (1-year terms).Director at Large, Director of Engineering, Director of Repeater Operations, Social Director, Director of Education (2-year terms).

At the April General Membership meeting, Joe will appoint an Election Committee.

Robert Kantor, N2TSE: Presented samples of the new participation awards (years 6-11) to the membership.

Officers/Directors Reports -

Education - Darlana Mayo, N2DB: spoke about Channel 7 news is proposing a "Skywarn Weather Watch Program," which would consist of registered weather monitors calling the station directly to report severe weather conditions.

Monitors whose reports were used would receive on-air credit. Darlana has program applications /information.

Lastly, there will be a SKYWARN training class (sponsored by another local Ham club) held on May 6th at the Yonkers Public Library. Interested parties should see N2DB for details.

Joe Brown, KB2NBN: Awarded Certificates of Appreciation for service "over and above" during WECAFEST '98 to Rich Sandell, WK6R and Rich Anderson, KB2MGM.

WECAFEST/Social - Tom Raffaelli, WB2NHC: Tom gave his annual presentation previewing WECAFEST '99. His slide presentation detailing the facility layout was preceded by some taken at previous Field Day events to help everyone remember what summer is like...

Tom finished his presentation by reviewing the responsibilities of the various positions which members will fill during the event.

Public Service - Robert Kantor, N2TSE: Reported on the upcoming PS events:
4/18 (Sunday) - Multiple Sclerosis Walkathon at Rye Playland. 8:00 am-1:00 p.m. 20-25 operators needed.

4/25 (Sunday) - March of Dimes Walk-America at Mt. Kisco. 8:00 am-1:30

p.m.

Announcements -

Tom Raffaelli, WB2NHC: Announced upcoming projects involving the two communications vehicles and solicited help from any members interested in volunteering some time

50/50 and Door Prizes - were awarded to 11 members.

9:33 p.m. - Motion to adjourn by Joe, KB2NBN. 2nd by Dave, N2OGK

Subject: MIC-E Emergency!

From: "J. Scott Ratchford, kc5jgv"

(This story was passed to the editor from multiple sources. Permission was granted by the author.)

<kc5jgv@bobcats2.oursc.k12.ar.us>

Date: Mon, 8 Mar 1999 00:10:53 -0600

X-Message-Number: 1

Wow! All I have to say is, WOW! The response was interesting, to say the least, and very rewarding to see that this stuff really works! But the look on the Troopers face will stay with me for a long time

So, here I am driving back from the Big Apple when I find myself in a helluva a snow storm on Interstate 76. The traffic is moving really fast, too fast, but not for long. As it seems always to happen, I am passed by a couple in a SUV probably doing in excess of 70 mph (don't laugh, the road was completely covered in snow!) when the driver decides to switch >From the fast to the slow lane. Well, that is OK at 35 mph, but not at 70! So, Mr. SUV, who obviously had no 4x4 experience, ended up turned 180 degrees before he could say @#\$, hit something and was over on his side before I could say @#\$, slid off the road, on the road and back off the road and into the only darn gully upside down and entrapped. I found out real quick how well my brakes worked, and nearly found out how well the brakes did not work for the fool behind me. So, I bail out with the mobile phone in hand and get down to the vehicle to find not one but two folks entrapped.

Dial 911, nothing. 1-877-patrol, nothing. 1-800-get-help, nothing. @#%\$, now what? Radio! OK, so back up to the van I go, "break, break, break for emergency traffic", nothing. Darn, here I am in the middle of who knows where, a huge snow storm, a serious accident, folks needing help, no one answering on 52, not a "bbbbrrrrraaaaappppp", OH HELL! APRS! So, I switch the MIC-E to 7, hit the button and well, the folks below can tell you how well that works! But this is only half the story, the rest is down below in these messages:

I received his EMERGENCY mic-encoder signal and called the PA state police. After their "we don't do lat and long" I managed to determine he was about 4 miles NE of the Kittatinny (sp?) tunnel on I76. It sure would have been nice to give them a vehicle description....

73 de Dan, W4DJV

Dan,

I too saw the Mic-e EMERGENCY beacon and also called the Pa. State Police..But I gave them a references to Exits and Rt numbers tnx to APRS+ and Delorme Street Atlas..I also gave the name of the individual to be contacted tnx to QRZ built into this program. But the bottom line maybe we helped someone and APRS does work

Good job Dan..

73 Clay/AA3JY

We just had a Mic-E emergency trigger alarms all over PA/MD/NJ area. We still do not know if it was real or just a bumped switch. But it does raise some topics: State Police were called: 1) Police do not do "LAT/LONG". APRSdos will display the nearest MILE Marker on the interstates, but appraently I missed I-76 in the data base. And PA is one of the states that does not equate MM to exits, so I cannot derive this from my maps unless someone sends it to me. I will post my needs in another message. DOS users Please do a MILE-MARK for all interstates of interest in your state and see if I missed any others, please tell me. (Calif does not have mile marks). 2) It would have been nice if there had been a "description" of the vehicle in its STATUS text. If all you can say is that an "unknown" vehicle is indicating an emergency, the police dont know what to look for. 3) I need to add a "temporary" alarm disable so that it doesnt keep re-triggering alarms all day. I dont want to allow a user to turn them off, but he should be able to disable it for a while. 4) Any other lessons?

de WB4APR, Bob

Jeffery,

I received an mic-e alarm from your vehicle today 3/6/99 at about 10am. We

responded by calling the Pa State Police. Your Last known position was on I-76 and Rt 74 just north of Carlisle, Pa. Let us know as soon as possible that everything is OK.

Clay/AA3JY

As you can see above, the message was received and understood! I hit the button a few times then switch it back to my regular "In Service" position as not to keep beaconing "Emergency". Well, we went back down to the vehicle where the folks were entrapped and waited for help. I can't describe how it feels when your in that situation other than your desire to do something to help. But due to the apparent seriousness of the injuries, we could do little more than keep them company and comfort them. Without any details, I can say they both survived. But this still isn't the end of the story. Little did I know that the APRS message was received as a Trooper had arrived within minutes of my transmission. He made no indication that anything was up, at not until I decided to leave. That's when I found out that APRS had delivered the Emergency message and that some one had called the SP. As I was getting ready to go, a Trooper called me over to the side and asked, "Are you Mr. Ratchford?", "Yes" (uh-oh, I though, now what?) "Do you have a LoJack?", "No, I have APRS" (relieved and grinning) "APRS?", Well, I spent a little more time there explaining the in and out of APRS. I left the scene feeling very happy about our hobby and especially our interest in APRS. That is the end of this story. But, not the end of this message

I thought about what had happened and kept wondering just who and HOW MANY screens I had caused to zooming on my pos. I've never tried that before as an experiment nor out in the field until now. I did think about the thing beaconing "emergency" over and over again and that is why I did switch the mic- e back to normal after a few transmissions. But this brings up the questions:

1. What would have happened if I had been near a TCP/IP? Would all the stations connected to the net had there screens center on my position? What would have happened if the "emergency" beacon had gone on for an hour? or two?
2. What "range" is applicable in an "emergency" call? I mean, should there be a limit as to how many stations would actually have there screens re-center on my position? Why would a station 300 miles out be concerned when there are 40 stations a lot closer? Should there be a user selectable range variable that can be set by each user of the APRS program? Some users may not want to respond to more than what they can effectively receive on 2 mtr direct or less.
3. Should there be and "emergency only status" information that contains your name, vehicle description and license tag number that is triggered and sent only

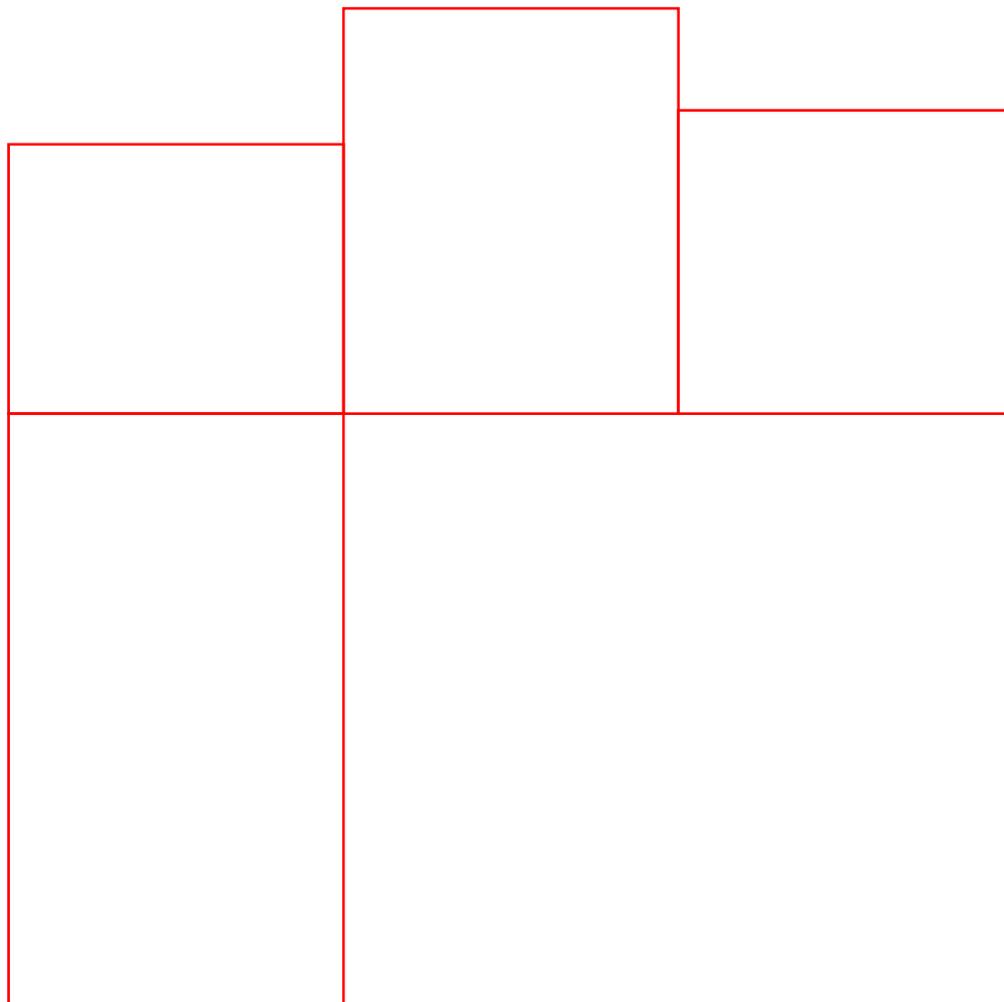
when the "emergency" button is pushed?

Well, I do want to say this, Thank You for responding in the way that you did for those who did respond, and thanks for the concern for my health and welfare. This has only strengthened my desire to keep promoting Amateur Radio everywhere I go, and I wouldn't be surprised to see a PA Trooper or two in the near future on APRS.

Good Day,
J. Scott Ratchford
General Manager Marshall Vega Corp.
Ham Radio - KC5JGV
Calf Creek Lodge #426

WECAFEST 99 Photos

Taken By; Russ N2AMP



Hudson Happenings

By Shirley Dahlgren, N2SKP

OTHER AREA MEETINGS:

CARA: (Candlewood ARA) Fri Apr 9, (2nd Fri), 8:00 p.m. at St. Paul's Church, Brookfield, CT (147.120+)

MBARC: (MT. BEACON ARC) on the air meetings - 8pm Monday evenings, 146.97 (PL 100)

QSY Society: Wednesday Apr 14, 7:30pm, Kent Fire House on Rt 301 in Carmel (Always the 2nd Wednesday of the month)

WARA (Westchester Amateur Radio Association) Weds Apr 7 (1st Weds), 8:00 pm at the Red Cross, White Plains

YARC (Yonkers Amateur Radio Club) Sun Apr 11 (2nd Sunday), 10:30 am at the 1st Police Precinct, E Grassy Sprain Rd. between Jackson Ave and Tuckahoe RD. Yonkers. Talkin 146.865

DACS: (Danbury Area Computer Society) Tues, Apr 6 (1st Tues), Topic: Paint Shop Pro, by JASC Software; 7pm Q&A, 8pm program: Danbury Hospital Auditorium, Danbury, CT. Visit their Web page: DACS.org.

MHCUG: (Mid Hudson Computer Users Group) Thurs Apr 8, (2nd Thurs) 7pm at the Best Western, Rt 9, Poughkeepsie. Topic: Disk Jockey 98, note: This meeting (only) will be held at Umberto's (aka Momma Marisa's Pizzeria). Visit their Web page: <http://www.idsi.net/mhcug/>

VE EXAMS

Thurs 4/8 White Plains, WECA, Westchester County Office Bldg, 7pm, contact Sandy N2SF, 285-3029

Tues 4/13 Pomona (Crystal RC), 7pm Rockland Cty Fire Training Center, info KF2JA 357-0712

Sun 4/18 Yonkers (YARC) 9am, 1st Precinct, Yonkers Police Station, info AC2V 237-5589

Mon 4/19 NYC (Columbia Univ VE team) 6:30pm, info Alan N2YGK 212 854-3754

Sat 4/24 Carmel (PEARL) 9am, Putnam County EOC, info Malcolm NM9J 736-0368

Tues 5/11 Pomona (Crystal RC), 7pm Rockland Cty Fire Training Center, info KF2JA 357-0712

CONTESTS

Apr 12, 20, 28, May 8: Spring VHF/UHF Sprints

June 26-27: Field Day!

HAMFESTS

Sat-Sun Mar 27-28 MARYLAND Convention, Timonium

Sun Apr 11 Orange County ARC

Sun Apr 25 BEACONFEST John Jay High School, East Fishkill

May 14-16 DAYTON Hamvention

COMPUTER SHOWS

Sat-Sun Mar 27-28 White Plains, Westchester County Center 9:30-4

Sat Apr 3 Middletown, Orange County Fairgrounds

Sat Apr 24 Middletown, Orange Cty Community College 9:30-4

Sun Apr 25 Poughkeepsie, Mid-Hudson Civic Center 9:30-4

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WECA upcoming events...

Monday April 12th, 7:30pm
Membership meeting

Sunday April 18th,
Multiple Sclerosis Walkathon at Rye Playland.

Monday April 22nd, 8pm
Board meeting

Sunday April 25th,
March of Dimes Walkathon at Mt. Kisco

Membership

By, Peter Johnson, N2TFC

This month, please welcome our newest members:

A.B. Gill, NF2E Yonkers, NY

Vito Liberatore, N2ZTF Yonkers, NY

Brad Lisnak, KC2CGI New York, NY

Need an ELECTRONIC ROSTER ?
Please contact n2tfc@weca.org.

Southern District Net

Sandro Sicilia N2TWN, Net manager of the Southern District Net, reports
Febuary 1999 SDN stats as follows:

Check-Ins 331

Traffic 72

Passed 68

Time 418

Sessions 28