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THE WECAGRAM



Newsletter of the

Westchester Emergency Communications Association, Inc.

Post Office Box 831

Sleepy Hollow, New York 10591-0831

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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 Monday October 4th 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 program for the October meeting will include Steve Mendelsohn W2ML, annual discussion about the upcoming NYC Marathon and other ARRL matters

Quick temporary coax connector

By Joe, WB2VVS

What do you do when a tropical storm strikes, you go to plug in your coax, but the connector breaks, and you can't remember precisely where your soldering iron is, or even

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if you have spare connectors?

Well, necessity was the mother of invention this past week. This is not the most beautiful, nor the most enduring, nor the best RF connection, but it worked...

1. I found a pair of scissors could cut off the old RG8/U minifoam.
2. Strip the outer shield.
3. Pull back the braid.
4. Strip the inner shield.
5. Carefully push in the center connector into the center of the female coax connector
6. Take a bit of the braid and placing it over the threads, and screw on the outer shield.
7. Place the coax in a position that will not get stress. (movement) Had I thought about it, I could have used packing tape to affix it to the rig.

Remember to replace this very temporary setup with a real coax connector ASAP.

PS: My apologies to the sensibilities of the technical committee, for this less than elegant "fix."





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. Or you can E-mail me!!!

E-Mail: n2tse@weca.org

Call: 914 949-4231

October. 16th, JOTA (Boy Scouts of America) will be at Croton Point. Park from 9 am to 5pm for setup operations, two shifts, and takedown. 20 people are needed for this event. We will set up and operate, uhf-vhf, code demo, and H.F.

October 30th, The New York State Police Troop T Headquarters has asked use to help in there Pumpkin Patrol for this year. More info to follow.

Turkey Trot in
Mamaroneck, NY. On Nov. 21 Sunday morning

Here is a review of a recent event

On Sept. 24.1999 for the leukemia society of America they had a walk Friday evening it was a 2 mile walk to raise funds. The WECA members how participated were n2tse, oby, inj, yyl, wa2nrv, wb2qja, w2rwr, kc2esu, k4zge. Many thanks go to them.

Elmer Needed

By Thomas Raffaelli

Bill Dreher is an accountant with clients in the Carribean where he owns a boat. He will be going south this winter and wants get his license before he goes. He needs help with the material. He would like a tutor to help him. He lives in the Scarsdale area. If anyone can help, please call him at 476-7512.

DF Hunting

Any members that would be interested in learning about DF Hunting, and also experienced members that are knowledgeable in it, and that would like to train, us new interested members, please contact me, via E-Mail: jcarpen215@aol.com.

73,s Joe Carpentieri KA2BRH

Tropical Storm Floyd hits Westchester

Alan Crosswell, N2YGK

Westchester County ARES/RACES

Sunday, September 19, 1999

Tropical Storm Floyd arrived in Westchester on Thursday with torrential rainfall. The first call for ARES/RACES operators came from the Red Cross on Tuesday, requesting operators for an expected 4pm start time at the Red Cross headquarters in White Plains and at an evacuation shelter, the Rye Country Day School. Next, the Office of Disaster and Emergency Services requested operators for the EOC in White Plains. By noon Thursday the 4pm start time had moved up to 2pm and Westchester County ARES/RACES communicators were on the job.

At the request of United Hospital in Port Chester, a ham was dispatched there as well. Later in the evening, additional shelters opened at St. Thomas Church in the Village of Mamaroneck, and the Town of Mamaroneck Fire Department. Plans were made to also open a shelter at the Mamaroneck High School.

As the evening progressed, what we now know to be close to a foot of rain fell in northern Westchester while only five to six inches fell to the south, and the "usual" Long Island Sound coastal flooding scenario turned into something very different. A report of two hundred commuters stranded at the Metro North Hudson Line train station in Tarrytown came in to the EOC. Additional commuters were reported stranded at Ossining and

Croton-Harmon. The Hudson Line was flooded out of service by rainwater rushing down the Hudson Valley hills and the County Office of Disaster and Emergency Services and Red Cross were scrambling to arrange transportation and shelter for the stranded commuters.

The rain continued to fall and mud slides and flash floods engulfed many Westchester communities from Yonkers to Katonah, along the Saw Mill, Bronx and Hudson Rivers as the small rivers overflowed their banks and water rushing down the hills to the Hudson carried mud, retaining walls, cars, and homes with them.

All the major highways were shut down with only the interstates staying open. National Guard trucks had to be brought in to transport shelter supplies to newly-opened shelters at Briarcliff High School and Copper Beach School in Yorktown. Local hams were dispatched to all these locations to provide communications. One of the two major area cellular carriers had a total service outage that is still ongoing three days later as this is written. Red Cross staff and volunteers were seeing "No Service" on their cell phones as were many others.

Two hams spent late Thursday night and Friday morning in the EOC making phone calls to all the municipal police departments and hospitals, gathering status information for the Public Safety Commissioner -- including significant road closures, structural damage, and local disaster declarations -- so that he could brief the County Executive who needed as much information as he could get to determine whether a county disaster declaration was in order and so the information could be further sent up the chain to the State and Federal governments. The hams at the EOC also relayed road closure and rerouting information to the Red Cross so that supplies and response teams could make it to the shelters in Briarcliff and Yorktown as hams at the Red Cross headquarters kept in touch with shelters to determine needs for supplies.

Friday morning came and went and the shelters were still open. Briarcliff High School became the home to 130 people, many of whom had been plucked >From their inundated cars on Route 9A. By Saturday, most shelters had closed and a new one opened at the FDR VA Hospital in Montrose. Damage Assessment and Mass Care teams began making their rounds. On Saturday, two Emergency Response Vehicles and a Damage Assessment Team were accompanied by ham communicators. On Sunday, three ERVs and two DATs went out with hams.

It is now late Sunday night and several hams are already scheduled to assist the Red Cross again on Monday with damage assessment and ERVs. Besides providing communications between the teams in the field and the Red Cross headquarters, these local ham operators also brought knowledge of the county's roads to assist several Red Cross teams from Nassau County navigate around the closed major thoroughfares such as Routes 9 and 9A and the Saw Mill River Parkway.

Those Westchester ARES/RACES members who have participated to date include: K2DFJ, KB2NBN, KB2NBO, KB2PHW, KC2DNO, KC2ESU (Westchester Red Cross), KE4GNJ (Nassau Red Cross/ARES), N2CJN, N2DB, N2DVQ, N2FMC, N2HTT,

N2JXN, N2NWZ, N2OBY, N2OGK, N2ONM, N2SKP, N2TJE, N2TSE, N2TWN, N2UXJ, N2YGK, N2YYL, W2RWR, WA2NRV, WA2ZCO, WB2NHC, and WB2VVS.

Several others offered their services and stood by in case additional hams were needed. [As usual in these around the clock events, some mistakes are invariably made, so if you participated and I left your callsign off the list above, please let me know as soon as possible and accept my apologies!]

The Disaster that Kept on Going

Joe, WB2VVS

After we helped out Suffolk County during the TWA800 relief effort, N2YGK and I asked ourselves what would we do if WE had a disaster that went on for more than two days. While we've had great turnouts for short term emergencies, we wondered how we'd do if we needed hams for two or three weeks for relief operations?

Unfortunately, we've had just a little glimpse of that. As I write this on Sunday night after Floyd, we've provided 21 different operators just today! And this was just serving one agency! We had more ops over the last several days, serving the National Weather Service, the Westchester County Office of Disaster and Emergency Services, and providing information for a wide variety of others. Looking over my notes, I see that the first call for assistance I got for Floyd was on Thursday morning. (And this doesn't count my contacting the EC's in other counties about preparations for disaster assessment BEFORE the storm hit!) Gee, time flies. I hope some of my clients remember me when I go back to my regular work! <chuckle>

Westchester is, in my non-biased opinion, very lucky to have some of the most experienced and best trained amateur radio operators for emergencies. Whenever Westchester hams have gone to other parts of the state to help out, I've always gotten glowing comments about their performance. (Those public service events, drills, traffic handling, and field day preparations really help out.)

Today, again, some of our members called just about the entire callup list (if not the entire list) recruiting members for tomorrow. As it's a workday, and many folks are just plain tired, or need to finally do repairs at their own homes, or go back to work for the first time since the storm, they had a small response. The fact that it's a religious holiday complicated matters too! In any event, all those who volunteered tomorrow will be needed, and we could easily use more. Many of the folks who spent long hours, or several days in a row at their radios, are part of a relatively small number who tend to volunteer whenever needed. However, this is not enough! We need a wider pool of volunteers for long term disasters. Please consider volunteering for drills and emergencies, even if you think you might not be highly trained. We'll take operator skills into consideration when making assignments. Help make a difference in the lives of others, both those we serve AND your fellow ham volunteers who NEED your participation. I think you'll find it a

rewarding experience. While the call I got at midnight on Friday morning was not met with enthusiasm at first, the stories I got >From working at the Briarcliff shelter those early morning hours are good enough to keep me in good stories for parties for the next six months at least!

I hope many of you will be able to make the Westchester County Airport Drill this coming weekend. (Today someone joked that perhaps we could skip the Airport Drill. I jokingly replied that perhaps the Federal Aviation Administration, which will evaluate the drill, wouldn't mind if we took the day off. I also hope many of you will be able to join in on the SET (Simulated Emergency Test) the next weekend. (I know, most of us don't feel we need a test!!!) However, this is a nationwide test, and we will be manning hospitals and doing activities in conjunction with a number of other counties. Working together with them may help us dramatically when and if we need to call them to help us in Westchester.

We all have stories about Floyd that are meaningful to us. For me, one of the most amazing sights was the destruction of a restaurant and a bridge that was next door to where I lived when I was a small child. Another was the good spirits of the folks whose cars were washed away, who were sleeping at a shelter. It seems to me that the power of helping each other out is about as powerful as the power of water.

PS: If you have any comments about our response to Floyd, positive or negative, please email them to either N2YGK or WB2VVS@WECA.ORG. We all like to learn from our mistakes, and do more of what works well.

73, and thanks!
Joe, WB2VVS
Westchester RACES RO
ARRL DEC

PARTICIPATION AWARDS PROGRAM UPDATE

By: Charlie G. Salvilla, KB2LLV

There had been mixed reactions regarding the new participation awards program that was officially launched at the September general membership meeting. Although positive feedbacks and compliments had been received, a couple of disappointments were likewise expressed. At any rate, thanks to all who shared their appreciation and frustrations. Facility of Expression is very helpful in the context of running a team-based organizational activity.

The goal of the Participation Awards is to recognize WECA members' involvement and contribution to club sanctioned and/or sponsored activities for the fiscal year that runs

from September through August. Qualifying participation is not limited to Public Service Events; it can also include other services such as being a Board Member and/or appointee, SDN Net Controller, or any other function, capacity or circumstances the Executive Board may deem appropriate.

At least one (1) participation in a club sanctioned and/or sponsored activity is required to be eligible for the current year's award. The participation must be consecutive to be eligible for the next year's award. Otherwise, the individual begins over at year one. For instance, if a WECA volunteer earns an award for the first year and did not participate in the second year but participated in the third year, he or she will start over at year one and will again be eligible for the first year award.

Recipients of the Participation Awards are determined after tabulating the names of all volunteers that were submitted by the Events Coordinators in charge of the various activities. If any WECA member believes that she/he is eligible for a particular year's award and was not recognized as such, please bring it to our attention and we will do the best we can to rectify the condition.

We continuously strive to maintain an accurate record for this Program. Errors of omission, clarity, and other discrepancies are purely unintentional and are subject to corrections and modifications. We apologize for any inconvenience this may have created.

Questions, comments and/or suggestions may be directed to the attention of Charlie G. Salvilla, KB2LLV at KB2LLV@WECA.org.

SEPTEMBER Membership Meeting

On 9/13/99 at 8:15 p.m. the meeting was called to order by Stan Rothman, WA2NRV

Announcements -

Will Austen, N2UXJ: Announced that the latest issue of the WECAGRAM omitted listing Mike Weitzner, N2EJI as WECA General Counsel.

Tom Raffaelli, WB2NHC discussed new WECAWEAR orders, that the summer WECAFEST was successful, that WECA is hosting the 2000 Hudson Division Convention, and a upcoming ARES/RACES drill.

Ray Albanese, N2FXU: Reminded us that the County Office of Disaster and Emergency Services (ODES) still needs volunteers for New Year's Eve Y2K event.

Sandy Fried, N2SF announced that the next VE session will be held at the EOC on 10/14 at 7:00 p.m.

Alan Crosswell, N2YGK, discussed the latest ARES/RACES activities and reviewed the essential points behind ARES/RACES operations.

Director's Reports -

Public Service - Robert Kantor, N2TSE: Reported on 8 WECA Public Service events during 98-99, He thanked all those that helped for there participation.

Stan Rothman, WA2NRV: Announced that WECA is looking for a facility to house a club station. Those with any information regarding a possible location should contact him.

Social/WECAFEST - Tom Raffaelli, WB2NHC: discussed the upcoming Jamboree On The Air (JOTA).

Digital Modes - Rich Benda, WB2QJA discussed new high-speed links that support TCP/IP. Members interested in using this new feature should contact Rich for information.

Other Business -

Les, K4ZGE, announced that his IC-27A had been stolen from his boat, and asked that anyone coming across someone selling it or other property of questionable origin please contact either the rightful owner or the proper authorities.

Participation Awards - Charlie Salvilla, KB2LLV, presented the usual awards to those members for 1-5 years of service, and inaugurated the new 6-11-year participation awards by presenting those members with awards

50/50 was won by Pat Murphy, W2IRL

Door Prizes - Winners: N2TWN, KC2B XK, N2WQG, KB2JKC, AA2HX, AC2T, and N2FXU.

10:23 p.m. - Motion to adjourn by Ken, N2OBY. Second by Dave, N2OGK.

***** From "The ARRL Letter" September 17:**

Ham radio volunteers along the East Coast from Florida through the New England States put their personal lives on hold for several days this week to volunteer for Hurricane Floyd duty. The huge storm, which sparked the largest mass evacuation in US history, caused a cascading series of Amateur Radio Emergency Service and Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service activations, starting in Florida and moving steadily northward. After sweeping ashore early Thursday, the by then fast-moving storm pushed past New Jersey and New York into New England and began to dissipate. The storm cleanup and recovery have begun.

The Hurricane Watch Net on 14.325 MHz was activated last weekend and remained on the air much of the week, gathering storm-related weather data as the storm passed over the Bahamas and made its way to the US shoreline. Information gathered on the net is funneled to forecasters via W4EHW at the National Hurricane Center. Net participants also were among the first to alert the rest of the world to initial damage reports from the battered islands. Many SKYWARN nets also tracked the storm's progress for regional forecasters and kept an eye out for possible tornado activity.

The Bahamas may have borne the brunt of Hurricane Floyd. Marty Brown, KF4TRG/C6A in Green Turtle Cay described extensive property damage to the Hurricane Watch Net. Operating from batteries Wednesday, she said there was significant tree damage in many areas, as well as roofs blown off, boat docks severely damaged, and power and telephone lines down. Brown collected reports from other hams via marine radio nets in the islands, including a report from Man o' War Cay that some two dozen vessels were aground there. Road damage--some severe--also was reported. Damage in the Abacos islands was said to be substantial. "Oh, man, what a day!" Brown said as she took a moment to catch her breath.

Hurricane Watch Net participants and controllers were hampered by less than ideal propagation. Several other Bahamian stations also passed along damage reports. Nets in the Bahamas were handling emergency and health-and-welfare traffic on 40 meters. A health-and-welfare net has been established on 14.262 MHz as well.

In Florida and Georgia, many of the ARES members activated were assigned to handle communication duties at shelters housing the thousands of evacuees ordered out of coastal counties deemed most likely to be affected by Floyd. Dozens of ARES and RACES teams throughout Florida and Georgia were pressed into service to provide shelter communications and to staff emergency operation centers and assist outside relief agencies such as the Red Cross and the Salvation Army.

"Luckily, Hurricane Floyd realized Georgia was very well prepared for his arrival, [so he] turned and remained far enough offshore to cause no significant damage to Georgia," said Georgia SEC Tom Rogers, KR4OL.

As the storm progressed, ARES and RACES activated regional nets on HF and, in some cases, VHF. The FCC declared voluntary communications emergencies for HF and some VHF repeater frequencies in several East Coast states. A voluntary communications emergency remained in effect at week's end for 3923 and 7232 kHz, plus or minus 3 kHz, in North Carolina, which suffered a lot of flooding in the eastern one-third of the state. All other declared voluntary communications emergencies have been rescinded.

Georgia ARES not only made use of HF nets but of the Internet. "The Georgia ARES Reflector was a key tool in the dissemination of factual information and pre-planning instructions," said SEC Rogers. "Not every operator in the ARES program has HF capabilities."

North Carolina still is reeling from the storm's effects, and the state has been declared a

disaster area. At week's end the Red Cross still had more than 200 shelters open in North Carolina. At one point, some 41,000 people took refuge in North Carolina shelters. More than 620,000 residents were without power. North Carolina Section Manager Reed Whitten, AB4W, said that he was glad that the storm did not plow further into North Carolina than it did. Fifty one counties had activated their local EOCs due to Hurricane Floyd.

Storm-related stories are likely to be the order of the day during the Virginia State Convention in Virginia Beach September 18 and 19. The hamfest will proceed as scheduled, despite flooding and wind damage, compliments of Hurricane Floyd. Virginia's Tidewater area already was a bit waterlogged from the effects of Hurricane Dennis earlier in the month. As did other states, Virginia suffered flooding and power outages, along with some downed trees. The City of Portsmouth was without water due to a pumping station failure in Suffolk, where the reservoir is located. Virginia SM Lynn Gahagan, AF4CD, reports the water outage caused the failure of a water-cooled generator at the Portsmouth EOC, which took down communication there. Some parts of Virginia experienced 100 MPH winds.

Downgraded Thursday to a tropical storm, Floyd continued to move rapidly toward the northeast. High winds, heavy surf and higher-than-normal tides were reported along the coastline from New York's Long Island and northward into Connecticut, Rhode Island, and Massachusetts. Heavy rain generated by the storm caused some local flooding. Downed trees and tree limbs and some power outages were reported in New England. Among other activities, hams in New England staffed weather-spotting nets on VHF to keep abreast of the storm's progress and any substantial damage or difficulties.

Letter From the President

Stan WA2NRV

It was a pleasure to see all the members on Monday for the first meeting of the WECA year. Although our scheduled speaker, Con Edison, or should I say Confused Edison, neglected to appear for our meeting. Our members and board representatives managed to make Monday's meeting an interesting and informative one.

The ODES would like us to help in situations where there are lines down from a pole alongside the roads. Since Con Edison did not show up to tell us what to look for or how to identify specific lines down. If you see a wire down from a pole consider it live and dangerous. Do not go near it. Call Con Ed at 914-921-3716 and report the location using street and nearest cross street names. If you see trees leaning on wires do the same thing.

It was difficult for some of our members to leave the meeting. They found it difficult to carry home the abundance of participation awards, now having grown to 11 separate awards for the first 11 years of participation supporting WECA functions. Did you qualify? All it requires is one WECA function per year. Those members unable to attend this meeting, should make an effort to pick up their awards at the October meeting. Bring a large carrying case. I would like to thank Charlie KB2LLV for redesigning the WECA one year buttons.

During the meeting Joe KA2BRH volunteered to setup a hidden transmitter hunt for WECA members. He needs help with this project and members interested in participating should contact Joe. If you are interested, but have no idea what is involved, tell Joe that you want to learn how to hunt for the bunny. We can have a small training bunny hunt where members with experience go with a car full of novices and show how to enjoy this aspect of ham radio. It can be a large or small group, guaranteed to be fun.

We are also looking for someone to take charge of our club projects. This requires choosing a project, \$ 25.00 or less, scheduling a time and location, and taking a list of members wishing to participate.

If you have questions or ideas you would like to have brought before the club contact Fran N2OLU, director at large or any board member.

Looking forward to see you at the meeting October 4th. Remember that it is the first Monday due to the Columbus Day holiday the second Monday.

ARES/RACES Shift Lengths

Alan Crosswell, N2YGK

Westchester County ARES/RACES

An issue that has come up in the past and came up again during the Floyd response was the number of hours hams are able to commit to. While many members spent as many as 16 hours straight on the job, staying from the onset of the storm to the next morning at shelters, the Red Cross headquarters and the EOC, several others were only available for short spans of two to four hours. While any amount of time committed is useful, it should also be helpful to understand the needs of our requesting agencies during a disaster: the Red Cross routinely schedules people for 12 hour shifts during the first days of a response. Once things have become more routine, the hours do as well. The case is similar for the EOC. It is not uncommon to stay the night at the EOC.

In a situation such as with response teams that are sent out in the field, it is often impossible to predict how long the team will be on the road or when they will be able to return. While the served agencies will work to accommodate volunteers' schedules, it does neither the volunteer nor the agency much good to commit to a two-hour time slot. You certainly will not be able to sent in a response vehicle at that point. Your services still can be used at the EOC or Red Cross headquarters, however, it does make it difficult to juggle

a staffing schedule and maintain continuity with frequent changes.

When volunteering for these kinds of duties, if at all possible, consider an open-ended time commitment with the expectation that if you start at 8am you will probably be just returning from a field assignment at nightfall. Yes, it is a rigorous schedule, but no more so than that of the volunteers we assist: For example, the Red Cross teams that came up from Nassau are here for as long as two weeks if needed and they are all volunteers.

Write for the WECAGRAM

Send your story by the deadline, which is on Monday, one week before the Board Meeting each month, except July and August

BY E-Mail to wecagram@weca.org

Please include your name and call sign for publication. Please put the body of your story in the E-mail to prevent cross platform, and other layout problems

WECA upcoming events...

Monday, October 4th, Membership Meeting

Saturday, October. 16th, JOTA at Croton Point

Monday, October 25th, Board Meeting

Saturday, October 30th, Pumpkin Patrol w/NYSP

Sunday, November 7th, NYC Marathon

Sunday, November 21st, Turkey Trot in Mamaroneck, NY

The Westchester County ODES is looking for members for a Y2K exercise on New Year's Eve, Contact Alan N2YGK or Joe WB2VVS. (Look at all the money you can save and be fed at the same time).

Southern District Net

Sandro Sicilia N2TWN,

Net manager of the Southern District Net, reports

SDN Aug. 99

QNS 365

QTC 82

QSP 81

QTR 454

in 31 session

Thanx to all the stations helping SDN for this very hot summer. Hope everybody got the good time. And welcome back to the last four months before we will close the 1999 all together for the next 1000 year
ciao Sandro 73 over

Q's= SDN(Southern District Net), QNS(Stations checked in), QTC(Traffic Brought), QSP(Traffic Passed), QTR(Total Net Time in Minutes)