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# 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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Volume 25, Issue 3

October, 2000

## WECA Hosts Hudson Division Convention Dinner and Hamfest

The ARRL Hudson Division Convention was held on September 15 and 16, 2000, with a dinner at the Elks Lodge in New Rochelle and with a hamfest at the Westchester County Center in White Plains, respectively.

A highlight of the dinner, which had over 80 attendees, included the awarding of the Hudson Division award for Technical Achievement to WECA's own Engineering Director, Bob Wilson, N2DVQ. Bob's team maintains the extensive WECA repeater system, one of the most prominent in the New York metropolitan area. Bob provided many technical innovations to the system, as well as provided for a complete backup repeater for 2 meters, making the repeater the favored choice of Westchester County ARES/RACES for the area's emergency repeater.

Other honorees included Phil Lewis, N2MUN, of Lindenhurst, LI, who won the Division Amateur of the Year award and John Burgio, W2JB of North Caldwell, NJ, as the Division's "Grand Ole Ham." The Hudson Division was also proud to recognize Diane Ortiz, K2DO, with the ARRL National Award for Public Relations, also called the Phillip J. McGan Memorial Silver Antenna Award.

Twelve forums rounded out the hamfest program on Saturday the 16<sup>th</sup>. Past glories were celebrated in forums discussing Marconi's radio experiments at Cape Cod, the history of amateur radio and "The Airwaves of New York." The present was represented by discussions of emergency communications, VHF contesting, space communications and antenna principles. The role of amateur radio in the future of telecommunications technology was also recognized.

ARRL President Jim Haynie, W5JBP held a popular forum talking about ARRL's role on behalf of *all* amateurs and as an information source for government and the public. ARRL's central role with the FCC and the three branches of the federal government in Washington figured prominently in Jim's remarks.

No ARRL/WECA event would have been complete without license exams, which were given by Richard Sandell, WK6R and his dedicated team of WECA special-events VE's. Nineteen people came out to obtain or upgrade their licenses, and all were accommodated courteously and promptly. Most even passed their tests!

All in all, our ARRL brethren from throughout the Hudson Division joined WECA members in a fun and memorable event.

## ARRL says, "Thanks, WECA!" for Hosting Hudson Division Convention By Tom Raffaelli, WB2NHC

Hudson Division Director, Frank Fallon, N2FF extended his appreciation and thanks to WECA for putting together another fine convention. He said that "the WECA team are professionals that make it look easy." While the flea market turnout at the hamfest was light, the dinner, forums and license exams were well attended.

So thanks also from Jeanne and me. Here is a list of the folks that gave their time to make the convention a success. If I left anyone off the list, please let me know so that his or her call may be added later.

AB2BX, K2 DFJ/NR/ZVI, K4ZGE, KA2 BRA/BRH,  
KB2 APX/LLV/NBN/VZK, KC2 COR/ESU/FYY,  
N2 AMP/DB/DHH/DVQ/EJI/FMC/GGY/GKM/IX/  
MWE/NQY/NWZ/OBY/OGK/SF/SLA/TFC/THE/  
TSE/TWN/VMN/WQG/YGK, N4OOX, NJ2J,  
W2 ML/RJA/RWR/XX, WA2 ATY/KHR/NRV,  
WB2 BTJ/NHC/VVS, WK6R.

### **IMPORTANT MEETING NOTICE!**

Please note that the next WECA membership meeting will be held on **Monday, October 2**, at 8:00 in the Westchester County Center. It will be a week earlier than usual because of the holidays falling on October 9.

Please come on October 2; we'd hate to miss you! It will be a "Marathon" session with main speaker Steve Mendelsohn, W2ML, as well as representatives from the NY State Police talking about the "Pumpkin Patrol."

# THE WECAGRAM

Editor: Mike Arrow, K2NR

The WECAGRAM is the official newsletter of the Westchester Emergency Communications Association, Inc., a Special Service Club affiliated with the ARRL, ARES, the Westchester County Office of Disaster and Emergency Services, RACES, and the American Red Cross, and is a member of the Westchester County Emergency Medical Services Council.

Any questions, comments, items for Swap and Shop, commercial advertising, suggestions, contributions and letters for inclusion should be sent to the editor at [wecagram@weca.org](mailto:wecagram@weca.org) or via postal mail at 2 Edna Place, New Rochelle, NY 10804-2516.

Submissions via e-mail to [wecagram@weca.org](mailto:wecagram@weca.org) would be greatly appreciated. Submissions may be edited for style and space.

**The deadline for inclusion in the newsletter is the second Monday of the preceding month. Timely publication relies on prompt submissions.**

All submissions are expressly the opinion of the authors, and do not necessarily reflect the official position of WECA, its officers, directors or the editor.

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WECA wishes to exchange newsletters with other clubs. All clubs wishing to receive the WECAGRAM in exchange for copies of their publications should contact the editor.

**WECA Officers and Directors: July 2000-June 2001**

## OFFICERS:

<b>President</b>	Stanley Rothman, WA2NRV
<b>Executive VP</b>	Philip Petrus, W2RWR
<b>VP/General Counsel</b>	Michael J. Weitzner, N2EJI
<b>Treasurer</b>	Andrew R. Farber, N4OOX
<b>Secretary</b>	Ken Gross, N2OBY
<b>Trustee</b>	Paul S. Vydareny, WB2VUK
<b>President Emeritus</b>	Joseph Brown, KB2NBN

## DIRECTORS:

<b>County Liaison</b>	(vacant)
<b>Digital Modes</b>	Richard L. Benda, WB2QJA
<b>Director at Large</b>	Sanford H. Fried, N2SF
<b>Education</b>	Efrem Acosta, AB2KJ (acting)
<b>Engineering</b>	Robert A. Wilson, N2DVQ
<b>Membership</b>	Angelina R. Morgante, KC2COR
<b>Newsletter Editor</b>	Michael M. Arrow, K2NR
<b>Public Relations</b>	David J. Weiss, N2OGK
<b>Public Service</b>	Robert Kantor, N2TSE
<b>Repeater Operations</b>	Dwight P. Smith, N2FMC
<b>Social</b>	Thomas R. Raffaelli, WB2NHC

WECA gladly accepts donations of equipment in new or used condition (e.g. from estates). Please contact WECA by e-mail, postal mail or telephone for further information.

WECA operates the following repeaters under call sign **WB2ZII/R**. All repeaters use PL 2A (114.8 Hz).

**147.060(+), 224.400(-) and 447.475(-) MHz**

The WECAGRAM is available on-line at:

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

## Views from the Shack #3: More Youngsters *and* More Oldsters

Last month, I talked to you about how I got back into amateur radio after a rather long break. The theme of how to drum up more interest in hamming seems to be a perpetual one among active amateurs. I talked about the subject with ARRL President Jim Haynie, W5JBP at the WECA-hosted Hudson Division convention in mid-September at the County Center in White Plains. We talked about how to reach young people and how to reach older people, too. While we realize that young people are the key to continuity of the hobby, it is also true that older people may have more time (and more funds) to enjoy and participate actively in amateur radio.

We all know the problems in spurring interest, right? Scoffers point to the image of hams as overweight old guys who are too nerdy to think about matching their socks, figures that only "Dilbert" could love. No self-respecting teenager wants to associate his image with *that*, whether they are electronics and communications enthusiasts or outgoing internationalists. On the other hand, older people who are desperately looking to connect with other people may think that they must be electronics whizzes to be hams.

In addition, I see an important social phenomenon out there: people are working harder and longer than ever, more and more husbands and wives are both at work for long days and membership in groups generally is falling by the wayside. Nobody seems to have time for *anything* any more. That phenomenon probably has had more to do with the decline of the ham population, as well as that of bowling leagues and volunteer organizations generally, than whether ham radio has become obsolete or terminally boring. So perhaps the barriers against growth of amateur radio are not confined to the hobby itself, but rather extend to the American way of life in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Since we as hams cannot do much about that, what *can* we do? How do we reach those who long for a chance for contact?

Sure, we need to reach out to kids and teenagers and get them interested in making friends overseas and developing skills which will be very, very valuable in the foreseeable job market.

But maybe we should also try to approach older people, particularly those who once were hams, and reacquaint them with the pleasures of hamdom, now that they might be looking to reach out and touch someone.

Nowadays, almost everybody knows in his heart-of-hearts that *exercise* and *activity* are good for you. Nevertheless, the reality is that lots of those right-thinking folks become couch potatoes when they get home from work. As hams, maybe we can't do too much about the *exercise* and perhaps we can't stimulate their bodies. But if we can just supply the *activity* to move them from the couch to a radio-operating chair, boy, can we stimulate their minds.

73, Mike K2NR

## From the President...

By Stan Rothman, WA2NRV

Summer is over and we now start the cooler weather and more WECA public service functions. Robert N2TSE is arranging training opportunities for us. They help us stay prepared for the natural and man-made disasters that could affect us. One outstanding event is the New York City Marathon, to be run on November 5<sup>th</sup>. Our speaker at this month's membership meeting, Steve W2ML, will tell us all about this fun event.

Soon, we will have the opportunity to participate in an Indian Point drill. WECA members were instrumental in the successful completion of an actual mobilization at Indian Point this summer. This proves that our training has been effective and worth the time and energy invested, but it is not over. There will be training drills for Indian Point on October 11<sup>th</sup> and November 1<sup>st</sup>, followed by the annual Indian Point exercise, where Westchester County depends on us, on November 15<sup>th</sup>. It is important that we continue our usual demonstration of quality communications during these annual events. Contact Alan N2YGK for details.

The Hudson Division convention dinner last month was a joy for all attending. WECA was well represented and our own Bob N2DVQ was presented with the Division "Technical Achievement" award. He certainly deserved it. The forums scheduled on the following day were impressive. Jim Haynie, W5JBP, ARRL President, provided us with a look into possible future changes. Jim had just spent considerable time in Washington representing amateur radio interests. Ken N2OBY, arranged the forums for the Division convention. I thank all members who worked diligently to make this a successful event.

If you have any additional nominations for the position of Education Director of WECA, contact any member of the Elections committee: K2ZVI, N2GGY, or N2KIM. Nominations will be closed at the conclusion of the October meeting. Remember that Efreem AB2KJ (ex-KC2FOR), our acting Education Director, is asking for input from our members regarding courses and/or projects you would like WECA to present for our members.

It is with a sad heart, I have to inform you that our own "Grand Old Ham," Julian Heilbronner, WD2ADT, has become a silent key. Julian was our senior member at 92 years young. You will remember him as attending most club meetings, even after Gordon West put him in a pickle and made him an "enlightened" member. Julian also was the net control for the ROMEO net, a network of WECA members throughout the East Coast, conducted nightly on 3.836 MHz.

I look forward to seeing all of you on Monday October 2<sup>nd</sup> for our monthly meeting.

73, Stan WA2NRV

## Off to the RACES...

By Alan Crosswell, N2YGK

Westchester County needs RACES operators for the following drills and exercises scheduled in order to prepare for Indian Point radiological incidents:

- Wednesday, October 11, 8:30 am-2 pm:  
Radiological Emergency Response (REP) *drill*.
- Wednesday, November 1, 8:30 am-2 pm:  
Radiological Emergency Response (REP) *drill*.
- Friday, November 3, 2:30-5 pm:  
Reception Center *exercise*
- Wednesday, November 15, 8:30 am-5 pm:  
Radiological Emergency Response (REP) *exercise*.

What are these drills and exercises? A *drill* is a SEMO-assisted practice for an exercise to make sure the training given to the various participants has been effective. (SEMO is the NY State Emergency Management Office.) An *exercise* is the FEMA-evaluated test of the system. FEMA is the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

The REP drills and exercises involve RACES communicators in the following roles:

- EOC communications room operator(s). Responsible for radio communications on the RACES repeater(s), answering telephones, sending, receiving, logging, and distributing faxes, and other tasks as requested by the OEM staff.
- JNC communications room operator. Similar to the EOC ops at the Joint News Center (at the airport).
- Field Monitoring Team (FMT) operators ride with the County Health Department monitoring vans into the affected area. Communications via RACES repeater(s) primarily reporting readings taken by the HD team and relaying instructions from the EOC to the team.
- Other ops performing random other tasks as requested by the OEM staff. No job is too small.

The REP *drills* give more people a chance to get familiar with each of the various roles, such as FMT, EOC ops, JNC ops. You are discouraged from participating in the REP *exercise* unless you have participated in the most recent *drill* to make sure you have been evaluated to be up to date on your skills. For new participants, the *drill* gives you the chance to prove yourself able to participate in the *exercise* and actual events.

The reception center exercise involves relaying messages as needed between the EOC and reception center (very similar to what we see in Red Cross responses to reception centers or shelters).

73, Alan N2YGK

*"Emergency Communications" is WECA's middle name... Train for emergency communications readiness and continue the proud WECA tradition. Contact Alan N2YGK.*

## From the Public Service Director... By Robert Kantor, N2TSE

I would like to thank all the people who helped out at the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society's Walk held on September 22. Those dedicated members are: KA2BRH, KB2JKC, KC2ESU/FYY/GWK, N2 AMP/CAV/FMC/THE/ TSE/ WQG/YL, W2RWR and WA2NRV. Thanks also to WG1HM, a non-member who came out to help all the way from Norwalk, CT.

I also want to thank all the people who helped at the American Heart Association Walk on September 24 with a job well-done. Those caring members include: KA2BRH, KB2NBN, KC2FNU/ FYY/GWK, KG2KO, N2 AMP/FXU/OGK/TFC/THE/TSE/ WQG and WB2BTJ.

Don't forget our upcoming events:

- Saturday, October 14, 8:30 am: Boy Scout Thunderbird Games at Croton Point Park, Croton-on-Hudson,
- Tuesday, October 31: the Pumpkin Patrol to assist the New York State Police (locations throughout Westchester County),
- Sunday, November 19: The Mamaroneck Turkey Trot at Harbor Island Park, Mamaroneck

PLEASE SIGN UP and help out. Call me at (914) 949-4231, see me at the membership meeting or e-mail me at [n2tse@weca.org](mailto:n2tse@weca.org).

## From the Education Director... By Efre Acosta, AB2KJ (ex-KC2FOR)

On the first Saturday of this fall season, I decided I needed to re-adjust my wire antenna. It was not as high up in the tree as I had hoped for, so with that in thought in mind, I went to work. After climbing my ladder I looked out over my neighborhood and realized my wife was right!! I am truly nuts, yes certifiable, bananas if you will. There I was with the squirrels thirty feet up pulling away on my wire antenna.

The key to this episode was that in the week prior I had re-read everything I had on hand about antenna placement. I eventually accomplished my goal and thought that every improvement I made in my station came about due to reference material from either a QST article or advice given by a more experienced ham. Each of these has helped or at least given me an idea on how to improve my signal.

Education and ham radio go hand in hand. It's those bits and pieces we bother to learn more about that make our hobby so enjoyable! Help WECA help you by providing your input. If anyone wishes to participate in a class or is looking for reference material on a project, please contact me. Please note my e-mail address still uses my old call of [KC2FOR@weca.org](mailto:KC2FOR@weca.org).

73's and Happy Hamming, Efre AB2KJ

## CQ Marathon Messengers...

The New York City Marathon will take place this year on Sunday, November 5. WECA reliably sends a large contingent and makes a significant contribution to the communications needs of this internationally renowned event. Find out more at the October 2 WECA meeting, where a discussion of the Marathon and the role hams play in making it work will be led by Steve Mendelsohn, W2ML, who is in charge of all communications at the Marathon. Please contact our main Marathon Man himself, Tom Raffaelli, WB2NHC at the meeting or at home at (914) 769-1486 and offer your amateur radio assistance for this significant event. It's great fun and a very useful service to the 30,000 dedicated runners and their families and friends who depend on us.

## WECA Again Recognized by ARRL as a Special Service Club...

WECA's designation as a "Special Service Club" was renewed by ARRL in a letter to Shirley Dahlgren, N2SKP received in September. In the letter, Margie Bourgoïn, KB1DCO of the League staff recognized our club "for its continued efforts on behalf of Amateur Radio and services to its community." WECA will retain the Special Service Club designation for two years, after which time that status will be reviewed for renewal again.

***Check your QST mailing label, and renew your ARRL membership through WECA!***

*Help WECA while helping ARRL. And, best of all, it costs you no more! Contact our Treasurer, Andy Farber, at [n4oox@arrl.net](mailto:n4oox@arrl.net) for details.*

## A Field Day Innovation This Year: Look, Ma, No Wires on this LAN... Thanks to IEEE 802.11b and APRS! By Alan Crosswell, N2YGK

WECA Field Day has long had a computer network set-up for contact logging with CT. This year's network included seven stations, interconnected by a combination of low-speed (1200 baud) serial links using plastic fiber-optic cable with serial-port powered modems as well as an opto-isolated copper serial run.

I was privileged to be a helper to Joe Bruno, WB2VVS; Norm Krajkowski, N2GKM and Peter Johnson, N2TFC, in setting up the CT network. There was a logging PC at each operating position and one for monitoring the contest at the food tent. (Unfortunately, due to a CT software bug experienced by many clubs, the network had to be taken down within a few minutes of the contest starting.) We also had an eighth non-networked station for learning how to use CT.

This year, in order to demonstrate some new technologies, especially those that might be used to enhance the effectiveness of our served agencies when operating in a temporary field encampment, we demonstrated IEEE 802.11b

Wireless Ethernet, APRS, and the Linux operating system. (Just the thing for Field Day!)

The wireless network consisted of a single Lucent Orinoco (Wavelan) Access Point II located in the Westchester County Office of Emergency Management's field communications van. Not being content to use the built-in dummy load on the IEEE 802.11b PCMCIA radio card, we mounted a small 6 dBi omni above the roof of the van.

In the comm van, the AP's wired Ethernet port was connected to a small Ethernet hublet which connected the "server farm," establishing the wired infrastructure. In this case, the server farm consisted of a single Pentium 100 laptop running the Linux operating system. The laptop's serial port was also connected to a TNC, which will be discussed below. The modem port *wanted* to be connected to the comm van's Cell Jack but we opted to save the County a big phone bill and confined our Internet activity to the Field Day site!

However, our site had most everything an Internet user has come to expect. While having all those running on one laptop might seem daunting to those not familiar with Linux, they are actually all fairly easy to set up and come bundled with standard free software Linux distributions such as Red Hat. Each service is packaged along with configuration instructions and samples.

To complete our Field Day wireless LAN, we of course needed at least one or two client PCs. We in fact had one laptop set up at the food pavilion, several hundred feet across the field from the comm van, and another roaming around the site [although for some reason it tended to gravitate to the food pavilion too:-)]. One laptop was running Linux, with a Netscape web browser, email, and the Xastir display. Another was running Windows 98, also using a Netscape web browser and email.

Putting the laptops on the WLAN consisted of downloading and installing the latest Lucent drivers (before arriving at the FD site!) and slotting the PCMCIA cards. Laptops already configured to operate on an Ethernet just worked, with the usual minor configuration changes (and for the Windows laptop, interminable Windows restarts after each change).

Having already been there and done APRSdos, WinAPRS, aprsplus, javAPRS, APRS on a TH-D7A, a Mic-E, and a Pic-E, and being a free software evangelist and author of tig2aprs, aprsmon, and aprsdigi, I had bookmarked the announcement of XASTIR by Frank Giannandrea, KC2GJS (ex-KCØDGE) several months ago and had been meaning to take a look at it. So Friday afternoon before Field Day, I downloaded Xastir, which is free GPL'd software and the two GPL'd libraries it requires (LessTif, and libax25). GPL is the Gnu Public License, a free software license that gives others the right to freely use, enhance, and redistribute software [even commercially] as long as the source code is made available and credit is given to the authors. For more info about GPL,

see <http://www.gnu.org>.

That night I built the program (from the source code) according to the well-written instructions that Frank provided, hooked up my TH-D7A in plain-old TNC mode, and was on the air! I tried it out with some aprsDOS format maps that I had made with tig2aprs, along with the Tiger-based county-coverage map of Westchester on the Sproul's WinAPRS web site. Everything worked quite well, especially given that Frank still considers his code to be Alpha-test quality. Not only were the compilation instructions well-written, but the built-in help was also quite good.

The next afternoon, I first helped get the CT network up [Our Field Day boss is a slave driver and wouldn't let me play with 802.11b or Linux until we had the CT running:-)]. Then I put up the WLAN and server farm, reconfigured Xastir to use the FD call sign (N2SF) and location of the site, fixed up a TNC config file to work with the comm van's AEA TNC command set, and Xastir was up and running. Next, I left the comm van, went over to the food tent with another laptop running Linux, SSH'd into the server and fired up Xastir for all to see. I left it running all day, demonstrating both that the 802.11b network did not suffer from or cause RF interference and that Xastir could run flawlessly for many hours with no problems as well.

This year we demonstrated two technical accomplishments: An IEEE 802.11b WLAN will work in the midst of several 100 W HF, VHF, and UHF transceivers and, with a Linux server, can be used to build a reliable, cost-effective, portable site intranet that provides traditional Internet services as well as a good-quality GPS-based amateur radio resource tracking system.

Next year at Field Day, we hope to use the WLAN for the CT network as well, but that depends on what kind of equipment donations we can finagle. Wireless ethernet PCMCIA cards still cost about \$150 and putting a PCMCIA card in an old desktop machine adds another \$60 to the cost, assuming the drivers can be made to work under DOS. Maybe by next year there will be some developments in the Amateur SS arena that will allow us to try it out as well.

73, Alan N2YGK

(Editor's Note: The above article was extracted from the author's technical paper entitled, "Linux, APRS, and Wireless Ethernet at WECA Field Day 2000." Readers desiring copies of the full paper should contact Alan N2YGK.)



**Next Membership Meeting:  
NOTE SPECIAL DATE--  
October 2 at 8:00 pm  
County Center, White Plains**

**From the Membership Director...  
By Angelina Morgante, KC2COR**

Thank you all for the positive response in renewing your membership. Congratulations to the following members who recently upgraded to GENERAL CLASS!

Robert Casino, N2GDY  
John Morgante, N2GGY  
William Colish, WA2HIZ  
Frank Ellsworth, WB2SFN  
David Jones, KA2YRY  
Mary Lou Levine, KB2APX  
Joseph Mancini, N2GCZ  
Robert Muller, KC2FYZ  
Malcolm Ochs, N2MEF  
Edward Rubin, N2JBA  
Steven Salman, KA2CFB  
Charles Salvilla, KB2LLV  
Jose Silva, KB2SPC  
Judyth Stavans, K2DFJ

**Want to see your name on this page next month? Upgrade your license!**

WECA sponsors VE exam sessions every other month. The next WECA VE exam session will be held on:  
**Thursday, October 12, 7:00 pm**, at the Westchester County Emergency Operations Center Sub-Basement, 148 Martine Avenue, White Plains  
Good luck from Sandy N2SF and the WECA VE team.

Congratulations to the following members who recently upgraded to EXTRA CLASS!

Russ Biltz, N3EMF  
Robert Chamberlain, W2HVX  
Joseph Ellman, KC2DWP  
Irving Felsenfeld, KA2ZJE  
Klaus Floer, AB2JD  
Glen Lalli, N2INJ  
Francis LaSorsa, N2OLU  
John Ruggiero, N2YHK  
Russ Stevenson, N2AMP  
Richard White, N2YME

Keep those updates coming in so you can be recognized in the WECAGRAM!!

WANTED: Membership Director needs a letter-folding machine. If you have one to donate, please send an e-mail to [kc2cor@weca.org](mailto:kc2cor@weca.org) or leave a message on the WECA Info Line (914) 741-6606. Thanx!



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