



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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WECA Members' Capability Glowed at Indian Point Exercise in Westchester

By Alan Crosswell, N2YBK

For the 2000 ARRL Simulated Emergency Test, WECA member-operators involved in Westchester County ARES/RACES participated in a "real" drill in which RACES is involved every year: the Indian Point Nuclear Power Plant Radiological Emergency Response Exercise. This event was held on November 15th and the two practice drills leading up to it occurred on October 11th and November 1st. WECA also supported the exercise with the use of its 2m repeater. The exercise was monitored and evaluated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), which earned a "well done" from FEMA and Westchester County officials.

This multi-county, multi-agency exercise tests the emergency plans that are in place should there be an emergency at any of the three Indian Point nuclear power plants. Two of these plants are in active service, with another having been mothballed in 1974. They are located in Buchanan, in the northwestern corner of Westchester County on the Hudson River. The plants are a stone's throw away from Orange, Rockland and Putnam Counties as well.

WECA members provide backup communications responsibilities that are written into county response plans, including: shelter communications at various schools outside the 10-mile designated evacuation zone; communications at the Personnel Monitoring Center (which is responsible for screening emergency workers for radioactive contamination as they come out of the field, among other things); communications at the main hospital emergency room, the American Red Cross and the County Emergency Operations Center (EOC).

WECA members assisted at the EOC communications

room in White Plains, at the Joint News Center (JNC) at the Westchester County Airport and with field monitoring teams (FMT).

EOC operator duties included general backup radio communications between the EOC, JNC and FMT's on the WECA 2m repeater system. EOC operators also made contact with the SEMO EOC in Albany on 80 meters (3993.5 kHz) as a backup to landline, satellite phone, and government HF radios. Finally, the busiest EOC operators were the fax runners, who routed faxes to and from the 20 or so agencies represented in the EOC and their respective headquarters, the plant, the JNC, other EOC's, Metro Traffic and other locations.

The JNC operators' duty was to keep the JNC in touch with the EOC. The two locations were separated by several miles.

WECA operators also rode with field monitoring teams who monitored radioactivity levels in the simulated affected area. Field monitoring teams consisted of three health department workers, a RACES operator and, in the case of the exercise, a FEMA evaluator and a drill simulation "controller" who reads off scripted queues such as simulated measured levels of radiation. These crews are responsible for confirming the perimeter of any radioactive "plume" in the event of a release to the atmosphere. Communications is via County public works radio system, cell phone, and WECA's repeater, in that order. All RACES operators qualified for FMT duty must have taken a personal dosimetry training class which outlines the guidelines for responders and how to use the kits consisting of thermo-luminescent (film badge) and direct-reading dosimeters and potassium iodide properly.

Participating WECA RACES members included: K2NR; KC2 BUV, CLZ; KC2FYZ, N2 AMP, CJN, DB, DHH, DVQ, FMC, HTT, NWZ, SF, SLA, TJE, TSE, VQP, WQG, YGK; WA2NRV; WB2 NHC, VVS.

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 or via postal mail at 2 Edna Place, New Rochelle, NY 10804-2516.

Submissions via e-mail to 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

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Social	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 #5: The Consequences of Lapses

It is not often that one hears about the history of one's own call sign in print—from the ex-holder of the call! Yet, that is just what happened to me. In the December issue of *QST*, an article ran that talked about the personal experiences of five hams that were affected by the FCC license restructuring that took effect this past April 15th.

Bob Doak, now AB2JR, was profiled in the article. Bob held my own call—K2NR—for years, until he lost sufficient interest in amateur radio to let his license lapse. His Extra Class license expired in February 1997. Bob did not renew his license within the two-year grace period and wound up not only losing his Extra Class operator privileges but a very nice call sign as well.

The story has good news and bad news. The good news is that Bob came back to amateur radio and was able to go from ex-ham to Extra ham in one sitting, in June of 2000, aided by the diminished code-speed requirement that is part of restructuring. That Bob is back in hamdom is good news for our hobby and a testament to the merit of license restructuring, too. The bad news was that, by waiting for April 15th and the new licensing rules, he missed out on getting back his old call.

Dear readers, you read in the September issue of the WECAGRAM that I, like Bob, was a wayward amateur whose interest in hamming was overtaken for a long time by other responsibilities. The difference between Bob and me is that I kept renewing my license, in a timely way, against the hope that I would once again be able to get back on the air and into an excellent ham club like ours as a full participant. Unfortunately for Bob, he did not renew.

You all realize, as Bob and I do, that the joys and responsibilities of life require that amateur radio be but one part of our lives. However, even though one may lose interest in amateur radio, or in WECA for that matter, maintaining a presence is vital at the very least to prevent unfortunate consequences. Most of us are dedicated hams, but we all sometimes forget to follow through on paperwork.

Folks, please *check your license expiration date regularly* (or let ARRL or W5YI do it for you), and *renew on time*. Remember that you cannot operate once your license expires, even within the two-year grace period, until you actually renew. WECA membership expires every August 31, and if you fail to renew your WECA membership, you may lose contact with your club friends. Bob Doak was able to recover his treasured Extra Class license, but lost a preferred 1X2 call. Don't lose your valuable license, your personal call sign identity or your important WECA affiliation by inattention or disinterest.

73, Mike (the present and future) K2NR

From the President... By Stan Rothman, WA2NRV

HO HO HO and Happy Holidays to all. I hope the holiday season soon finds your shack filled with new goodies. One of them could be our proposed club project, an 80-meter QRP PSK31 transceiver for under \$ 40.00. See Nick K2ZVI (no, not *Saint* Nick), who is in charge of the project.

We were active last month with the NYC Marathon, Pumpkin Patrol, the Indian Point drills and exercise and the Mamaroneck Turkey Trot. These events allowed our members to stay proficient and involved in public service. Robert N2TSE is looking for more elves for Santa's visit to the Blythedale Children's Hospital on December 20th. We also need donations to cover the cost of the gifts for the children. If you have any questions regarding this program, contact Robert N2TSE or George K2RRR.

We owe a vote of thanks to Joe KB2NBN and to Chase Manhattan Bank for Chase's donation to WECA. The donation recognizes our public service and educational programs. However, we continue to need and are grateful to accept grants from any and all available sources so that WECA can continue all its projects. For example, Tom WB2NHC felt that he could not properly support WECAfest this coming year, due to limited club funds. We are still looking for a location where we could have use of the facilities for a very limited cost for a possible restoration of the 2001 WECAfest.

Efrem AB2KJ is planning on running some courses in January. If you are available to assist him, please let him know as soon as possible.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the directors and officers, and committee members for the time and effort they expend on behalf of WECA. They are half the people, frequently in the shadows, that make our club work. The other half is you the general membership. Pat yourselves on the back for a job well done. If there is any area in particular where you would like to assist the club, speak to the Director of that area, Sandy N2SF, our Director-at-Large.

All RACES members are reminded that to wear the new Westchester County identification badges during RACES activities. If you have not been photographed by Ray for the ID badge, please contact Ray N2FXU or Joe WB2VVS to make arrangements.

I look forward to seeing all of you at the general meeting, December 11th.

73, Stan WA2NRV

From the Education Director... By Efrem Acosta, AB2KJ

The winter chill will soon be here and what better time to spend learning about reading about Ham Radio? QST has always been a source of information to both old and new hams the world over. Why not take the plunge and perhaps learn about satellite or digital modes now? Or perhaps keeping your feet closer to the earth, Nick K2ZVI is looking to get a PSK 31 club project off the ground. Gee, who knows...you just may find something here to really get your interest going. Whatever you decide, why not study, even if it is only to find a way to improve the signal on your present rig? What you learn will benefit you now and make you a better operator. In the future, you can pass along those tips to new hams and ensure that our hobby grows!!

Look for a no-code Tech class in late January or early February; details to follow.

Wishing you and your family very Happy Holidays!

73, Efrem AB2KJ

From the Treasurer... By Andy Farber, N4OOX

I am re-starting our grants program. Many large companies make contributions to local, not-for-profit companies; we received a grant last month from the Chase Manhattan Foundation. As a first, low-profile step to soliciting additional grants, I would like find other companies that grant funds to employees' clubs. Please send me an e-mail with your name and the name of your company. I will contact the Human Resources department WITHOUT using your name, to find out if they participate in these programs.

73, Andy N4OOX

Renewing your ARRL membership?
WECA receives \$2 for every ARRL member who renews through the club. Best of all, it costs you no more! Please make your check payable to "WECA", and mail it with ARRL membership form directly to our Treasurer: Andy Farber, N4OOX, 29 Tarryhill Road, Tarrytown, NY 10591.

Help Me Put An Elmer in Your Radio

By Bill Dubin, AB2FM

I have developed a program called Bands. I am looking for help in supporting several different transceivers what have serial port computer control. To date, I only support my own Kenwood TS570. I thought the program would be useful for WECA members. So I have put it up on the following web site: www.columbia.edu/~wd16/Bands.htm, where it may be downloaded. I would also appreciate it if some of the members could send me the serial port communication parameters for their radio so the program will be able to support several radios. What follows is an introduction to the program, and instructions for sending the serial port control data.

Bands in an instructive as well as interactive user interface. For the beginner it is like having a virtual Elmer. For the expert is an online assistant which facilitates day-to-day operations, and serves as a constant reminder as to what are legal operations. As an e-Elmer, it answers the following questions:

- On what bands can I operate with my current license?
- What are the frequencies that are legal for me to use with each of my allowed bands?
- Within each band, where can I use or find the various broadcast modes, CW, SSB, etc.
- What are the privileges for hams with other licenses?
- What is there to listen to outside of the amateur bands?

If your transceiver can be computer-controlled with a serial port, it is possible to tune your radio directly from the Bands interface. It can be a convenient way to move around the bands quickly and to find frequencies that are of interest to the operator.

Bands has a database which includes the amateur band plan. The band plan is the basic resource for knowing where to receive and transmit using a particular mode. In addition, there is a list of frequencies that may be of interested for exploring the non-amateur bands. The database can be edited by the user, making it possible to save specific frequencies for future use. The database can also be queried to select subsets of frequencies.

I hope to expand the list of radios that Bands supports by getting your help. If you have a transceiver that can be computer-controlled, I will be glad to make modifications of Bands to support your radio. In order to do this, please send me the serial port communications protocol for your transceiver. This includes the standard serial port parameters:

- Baud rate
- Parity (even, odd, or none)
- Number of Bits (7 or 8)
- Stop bits (1 or 2)

In addition, send the string or protocol that gives the specific command to tune your radio. For example on the Kenwood TS570, a command string is: `FA00014150000;`. (Do not include the period.) The FA is the command to tune the A VFO. The 11 digit number is the frequency in Hz, and the string is terminated with a semicolon (;). This string is output to the radio in order to tune it.

Also give the string which inputs the frequency that the radio is currently actually tuned to. For example, the string `FA;` is used to input the current frequency of the A VFO on the TS570 to Bands.

Please send this information to me at e-mail wd16@columbia.edu, telephone 914-834-1362 or mail:

Bill Dubin
44 Edgewood Ave.
Larchmont, NY 10538

New York Call-Letter License Plates: Sending “CQ” on the Road

The New York State DMV offers special license plates, using the registrant's call letters as the plate number, for hams. The new plates have distinctive design (an antenna tower, the words “Amateur Radio” and Morse code for “CQ de” instead of the Statue of Liberty) and will *not* be replaced in 2001-02 when the “Liberty” plates are to be retired. New York recognizes the special role of hams in emergency operations and grants a significant discount from regular “vanity” plate fees to ham plates. The ham plates only cost \$5 extra per year above the registration fee, versus \$25 extra annually for vanity plates.

For those readers who don't already have these plates on their cars and would like them, bear in mind that the car that will bear the plates must be registered to the licensed ham *only*. Registrations in two or more names may only receive call-letter plates if *all* of the registrants are licensed hams. Plates are not available to hams at the time of initial registration; they may only be issued to replace existing plates. Here's how to get them:

- Complete DMV Form MV-411 (Emergency Services Customs Plates). This form is in PDF format and may be downloaded from www.nydmv.state.ny.us. Follow the links to the Emergency Services series of custom plates.
- Mail the completed form with copies of the existing NY State registration and FCC license, plus a check for \$18, to the address shown on the form.
- The new plates, registration receipt and window sticker will arrive in 6-8 weeks.

If you do not have Internet access, further information may be obtained by calling the DMV Custom Plate Unit at 518-474-6660 in Albany.

Postscripts to the NYC Marathon By Charlie G. Salvilla, KB2LLV

On November 5th, 2000, WECA rallied its troops and participated in the New York City Marathon as official communicators for the event. Organized by the New York Road Runners Club in cooperation with the City of New York and various commercial sponsors, the New York City Marathon has become a major yearly attraction worldwide. Some 32,000 runners from all over the globe entered the race that spans 26 miles and 385 yards. According to statistics compiled by the *Daily News*, the Marathon event consumed and/or utilized 50,000 donuts, 132,000 safety pins, 642 tubes of KY Jelly, 30,000 sponges, 300 gallons of marathon blue paint, 4.5 tons of ice, 9,000 roses, 50,000 balloons, 1,200 feet of fire hoses, 2 million paper cups, 130,000 bottles of water, and 350 volunteer linguists and/or translators.

By pursuing such activities as serving as Marathon communicators for the past 23 years, the amateur radio community has long fulfilled its FCC-mandated objective of service to the public. At WECA, volunteering for the Marathon has been routine. This is one of the public-service events that the membership looks forward to.

Except for the new official wheelchair competition joining the race, this year's event was not really very different from those of the past. As to the weather, it was initially sunny and turned cloudy towards the afternoon with temperatures ranging from 37F in the morning to 42F by dusk. However, it felt a couple of degrees colder because of the wind-chill factor.

One of the several Mile Post stations operated by WECA members was Mile Marker 23, located at 102nd Street and 5th Avenue inside the Central Park perimeter entrance. Here, fourteen amateur radio volunteers provided communication coverage. A simplex frequency was set up for internal mile-point communications. To maximize the utilization of the operators and widen the coverage area from 118th Street to 96th Street, two groups were created to patrol between Mile Post 22.1 to 23 and Mile Post 23 to 23.75. In addition, another group was assigned at the Mile Marker 23 base station to operate the simplex frequency and assist the Mile Captain in monitoring the Logistics, Course Medical, and Drop Out traffic nets.

Fortunately, no major incidents/accidents were reported and everyone had a good time enjoying the event in its entirety. It was a beautiful occasion to enjoy the fall season at Central Park in the company of fellow hams!

73, Charlie KB2LLV

"Emergency Communications" is WECA's middle name...
Train for emergency communications readiness and continue the proud WECA tradition. Contact Alan N2YGK or Joe WB2VVS for details.



An early-morning shot of WECA Marathon operators taken inside Central Park's Mile Post 23: From left: Milton KC2GWK, "Wires" KC2FYY, Joe KB2BRH; Charlie KB2LLV and Stan WA2NRY (Mile Captain).



Southern District Net Year End 2000 Report By Sandro Sicilia, N2TWN Net Manager

Activity for October:

Stations Checked In:	341
Traffic Received:	85
Traffic Passed:	84
Total Net Time Duration:	524 minutes
Total Number of Sessions:	31

Special thanks to Darlana N2DB, assistant net manager, for a job well done again. SDN recognizes with thanks our alternate net control stations: K2BTP; N2 DB,TSE; KC2 AHS,BUV,DAA. They ensure SDN operation every day, all year long, keeping NTS one of the best nets for training and message handling purposes.

I want to recognize all the stations checking in from New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut. We hear from liaison stations in the Big Apple, Hudson Valley, Nassau County, New Jersey Early and Late, and the new Connecticut Independent Nets. And thanks to all the stations checking in just to have a few words on the air or to say "hi" to a friend. They, in one way or another, keep SDN a very important net filled with good amateurs who are always ready to help on any occasion and with very big hearts.

I wish all the best for the upcoming Holiday season, for a great end of the year and for a wonderful new year with peace for you and your families. Thanks to all for making SDN a part of my life.

73, Alessandro N2TWN



**Next Membership Meeting:
December 11 at 8:00 pm
County Center, White Plains**

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

Please welcome the following *new* members:
WA2RMB, LARRY SHAIN, NEW ROCHELLE, NY
KC2GYP, PETER BREGMAN, ARMONK, NY.

Please welcome back the following *returning* member:
W2XV, GIULIO RUOCCO, YONKERS, NY

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

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

WECA sponsors VE exam sessions every other month.
The next WECA VE exam session will be held on:
Thursday, December 14, 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.

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

I would like to thank all of the members who help make the
2000 Mamaroneck Turkey Trot a safe and fun event for all
participants. They are: K4ZGE; KA2 BRH, KCR;
KB2 LLV,NBN; KC2 ESU,FNU,FYY,GWK;
N2 AMP,FMC,NAA,OLU,TFC,TJE,TSE,TWN,WQG;
WA2NRV and WB2NHC .

Thanks to all these dedicated members!

Don't forget this upcoming event:

- Wednesday, December 20: Santa-Claus-on-the-Air at
Blythedale Children's Hospital, Valhalla.

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.

Also, don't forget to e-mail any changes in your call sign to
Charlie KB2LLV (as well as to Angelina KC2COR). Letting
Charlie know about changes in your call will help ensure
that you don't lose any longevity credit for participation
awards. In addition, if you have changed your call sign,
you may want your new wallet-card license document to be
laminated. Please contact me for that service (50 cents
per document).



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**RUSH -- DATED MATERIAL
PLEASE DO NOT DELAY**