



THE WECAGRAM

Newsletter of the
Westchester Emergency Communications Association, Inc.

Post Office Box 831
Sleepy Hollow, New York 10591-0831
WECA Information Hotline: (914) 741-6606
WECA Web site: <http://www.weca.org>



Serving the Public through Amateur Radio and Serving Amateurs since 1972

Volume 25, Issue 8

March, 2001

WECA February Meeting Snowed Out; Bylaws Amendments to be Raised at March 12 Meeting

First, it was Lincoln's Birthday, which required rescheduling the February meeting from the usual second Monday (February 12) to February 5. Then, Mother Nature prevented dedicated WECA members from attending the rescheduled meeting, due to snow and travel hazards. Stan Rothman, WA2NRV, WECA President, recognized that the February general meeting just was not meant to be and canceled it.

Proposed changes to the WECA Bylaws will now be discussed at the next meeting, scheduled for March 12. These are summarized below:

- **NAMES:** The Westchester County Office of Disaster and Emergency Services is renamed the "Westchester County Office of Emergency Management" (WCOEM).
- **COMPOSITION OF DIRECTORS:**
 1. The County Liaison is redefined as an employee or volunteer in WCOEM, since the County no longer has a Communications Officer.
 2. A new WECA Director, "Emergency Services Director," is proposed. He or she will be responsible for liaison with ARES, RACES and other emergency-services-related issues. This does *not* replace the Public Service Director, whose position remains unchanged.
- **ELECTIONS:** A "Statement of Qualifications" is proposed to be distributed with ballots, as well as being included in the WECAGRAM.
- **MEMBERSHIP:** A new membership category, Life Membership, is added. The membership dues for a Life Member are 20 times the annual dues (which is the same as the ARRL).

The complete text of the Bylaws runs 29 pages, and the proposed changes are reflected throughout the document. The complete text—with changes highlighted—is available from Andy Farber, WECA Treasurer, in PDF format via e-mail at n4oox@weca.org or printed and mailed by calling him at (914) 378-2531.

IMPORTANT: Voting on the amendments is expected at the April meeting.

New Rochelle Reviews Zoning Issues: Generator Proposal Redrafted, Tower Heights May Be Further Restricted

New Rochelle is now reviewing its local zoning code, and there are two proposed revisions of special interest to amateurs.

As reported in the Summer 2000 issue of the WECAGRAM, the city held a public hearing on restricting the use of electric generators by city residents last July. The generator proposal has been redrafted in the meantime to permit generators in one-family residence districts, provided they are fully enclosed in a building, they are not located in a code-required building setback, that their noise in non-emergency operation does not exceed 70 dBA at 25 ft, that they are not wind turbines, that they are screened with vegetation and that such vegetation be guaranteed to be maintained by a ten-year bond. Although it is unusual for a maintenance bond to be required for issuance of a residential permit, testimony of the amateur community seems to have spurred a considerable improvement in the generator proposal.

In another proposal, New Rochelle is proposing to reduce the maximum allowable height of amateur antenna towers from 75 ft to 35 ft, to increase the setback of the tower from 15 ft (measured from a rear or side lot line) to the height of the tower (measured from *any* lot line), and to require a maximum footprint of 4 sq ft (in lieu of a 2-ft "base").

Public hearings on the zoning code proposals (including the two cited above) are expected in early April. Amateurs desiring more information or who wish to attend or testify at the New Rochelle hearing should contact Jerry Agliata, W2GLA, at 176 Wilmot Road, New Rochelle, NY 10804, phone (914) 633-0559.

Renew your ARRL membership and help WECA!
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.

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 third 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:

President	Stanley Rothman, WA2NRV
Executive VP	Philip Petrus, W2RWR
VP/General Counsel	Michael J. Weitzner, N2EJI
Treasurer	Andrew R. Farber, N4OOX
Secretary	(vacant)
Trustee	Paul S. Vydareny, WB2VUK
President Emeritus	Joseph Brown, KB2NBN

DIRECTORS:

County Liaison	(vacant)
Digital Modes	Richard L. Benda, WB2QJA
Director at Large	Sanford H. Fried, N2SF
Education	Efrem Acosta, W2CZ
Engineering	Robert A. Wilson, N2DVQ
Membership	Angelina R. Morgante, KC2COR
Newsletter Editor	Michael M. Arrow, K2NR
Public Relations	David J. Weiss, N2OGK
Public Service	Robert Kantor, N2TSE
Repeater Operations	Dwight P. Smith, N2FMC
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 #8: Fear of Heights

An important part of a ham's connection with the world is his antenna. It is often better to have a lower-powered rig with a good antenna than a higher-powered one with a second-rate sky hook. At the same time, hams must connect with their neighbors, too, who probably do not share a ham's affinity for a radio antenna tower.

The rights of the individual and those of the community have been the subject of age-old rivalry. Towns and cities have been empowered to create zoning regulations that make for desirable communities while accommodating the various needs of their citizens. Moreover, a rivalry between various levels of government exists: local governments retain those rights that are not expressly authorized to state and federal governments. Amateurs' antennas seem to attract such rivalries as much as they attract lightning bolts.

New Rochelle, a Westchester city that traditionally has been fair to amateurs, is now considering a change to its zoning ordinance that is expected to go to public hearing early in April. Details of the zoning proposals are contained elsewhere in this issue. Plainly, the proposed New Rochelle zoning code is trying to reduce allowable amateur tower heights and to restrict towers to much larger lots than those previously entitled.

Why the city is considering further restriction on a situation that does not seem to be causing a problem is unclear. What is even less clear is why New Rochelle is risking a showdown on tower heights when its own state Assemblyman, Ron Tocci, has introduced a state bill to spell out federal governmental rules (PRB-1 rules, in FCC parlance) regarding amateurs that pre-empt local governmental rights. Why is there such urgency now? Is there a rational explanation for a newly discovered "fear of heights" in Westchester? Somehow, it escapes me.

ARRL doubtless will have something to say about this matter. Frank Fallon, N2FF, the ARRL Hudson Division Director, has had a long-standing interest in PRB-1 matters in New York and New Jersey. While WECA, unlike ARRL, is not a lobbying organization, we believe that well-informed members are better citizen-hams.

As a radio amateur, you may want to follow the proceedings in New Rochelle, come to the New Rochelle public hearing or even testify regarding the proposal. If you are concerned about hams' tower rights, I urge you to get more information about this case and contact Jerry Agliata, W2GLA, as indicated on page one. Keep an eye out in your community for new proposals; local regulations can change, for the better or worse, for hams at any time.

73, Mike K2NR

From the President... By Stan Rothman, WA2NRV

March is following a windy February, making it difficult to come in like a Lion and retreat like a Lamb. Although we were unable to hold our February meeting due to a snowstorm, WECA has been active.

We have a nominating committee for WECA Directors: Peter N2TFC, Russ N2AMP and John N2GGY. They might be calling you to offer you an opportunity to serve WECA. Please give it due consideration, and say YES if they call.

Contact Fran N2OLU if you want to learn about an area of amateur radio you have not explored before, or if you just want help in getting started. Fran is in charge of the Elmer program. He is also in charge of the WECA loan closet. We now have solid-state equipment that was donated by the family of Julian WD2ADT.

Members who want to take part in building the WECA club project, a PSK31 transceiver, and were unable to pay the \$40 cost due to the cancelled meeting, should contact Nick K2ZVI as soon as possible.

When you think about those DX contacts and QSL cards, you think about the NJDXA and the W2 QSL bureau. I caution you, before you send them money for credits, find out what their rules are, in writing. I just found out that they take your money and spend it on anything they want except sending you your QSL cards, if you do not receive cards in what they feel is a proper time. In other words, unless you actively send and expect to receive cards, beware. I learned of this in a note from Ron K2CO, the bureau manager. He does not feel that taking money and not using it for that purpose is theft. Only in America.

If you want to upgrade your license to work DX, contact Efrem W2CZ. He is running a Technician Class course now and is planning an Extra Class session during the summer.

WECA was able to help a New Rochelle ham that was having problems on 20 meters. We were asked by the ARRL to assist an OBS RTTY station operator, who, unknowingly, had spurs on his signal. With WECA assistance, he is now back on the air, transmitting ARRL bulletins. Being part of an organization with the willingness and expertise to help out like this should make you proud to be a WECA member.

I look forward to seeing you on Monday, March 12 at the Westchester County Center in White Plains. Please leave the snow at home.

73, Stan WA2NRV

From the Education Director... By Efrem Acosta, W2CZ

It has been confirmed that there is an outbreak among members of WECA! There is a contagious fever running through our ranks. What I am writing about is Upgrade Fever!

Upgrade fever begins with a burning desire to gain new privileges on the amateur bands. It is usually followed by intense study and finishes with a smiling ham operator who walks out of a VE session with a CSCE (Certificate of Successful Completion of Examination). If you walk into a room where hams are afflicted this disease, STAY THERE; you may catch it.

Anyone who wishes to learn how to upgrade or who is having difficulty in doing so should contact me either on the 2 meter repeater or email me at W2CZ@arrl.net. If you are in the final stages of this disease, you should contact Sandy N2SF in order to schedule yourself for the next VE session.

Special thanks to Gene AE2F, who has agreed to try to form an Extra Class upgrade course. As soon as the details are complete, I will pass on the information to those who are interested.

Congratulations to "Wires" KC2FYY and Dana KC2CLZ who were recently affected by this fever and are now new General Class licensees. Generals, your armies await.

Happy Hamming, Efrem W2CZ

Got Licensing Questions? The "Vanity Blues?"

Contact your Editor, Mike K2NR, a member of the WECA VE team, at wecagram@weca.org for personal answers to questions regarding license renewal, new licensing rules, obtaining new systematic and vanity calls, etc.

WHY ARE RADIO AMATEURS CALLED HAMS? WECA member Dan Calabrese, AA2HX, writes:

The word is so widely recognized that it appears in most major dictionaries, yet its background is vague. It probably originated in the heyday of wire-line telegraphy around the turn of the century, when operators tapped out messages in the American Morse code on big brass keys. If they slapped the keys too hard and made too many false characters, other operators would refer to their hands rather derisively as hams in the sense that they were heavy and awkward. Consider a related expression, ham actor, which is popularly used to describe an inept performer. In the radio field, however, the word ham quickly lost its original uncomplimentary meaning, as amateur operators became more skilled than many of their professional counterparts. Today, hams everywhere refer to themselves almost exclusively as hams rather than as radio amateur. Even the many female amateurs now on the air are hams and proud of it. If you are an amateur radio operator, you enjoy being a ham! *(Editor's note: the origin of the term "ham" indeed is vague. If you know of another one, let us know!)*

Getting Ready For Field Day By Tom Raffaelli, WB2NHC

June 23 & 24, 2001 will once again find WECA folks at Harbor Island Park in Mamaroneck. The permits are secured and the planning has begun. If you would like to be part of the planning team or just want to pass on some ideas drop a line or a dime.

Our triband beam antennas are starting to show their age (aren't we all). They need some tender loving care to keep them in top performance. We are looking for someone to take one or both beams and make some necessary repairs. If you want to help, please let me know. Also, if you have a simple three-element beam that you would like to donate, the club would be grateful. If you have a video of previous Field Days, please let me know, as I would like to borrow the original. I am preparing a multi-media presentation on Field Day.

For the third year, the ARRL is offering Field Day pins and for the first time, a Field Day shirt.



The pins are 3/4" by 1" with a red and white stylized ARRL flag and the League emblem in blue. The pins cost \$5.00 each. The black and white picture here does not do justice to the brilliant colors.



The shirt has the same Field Day logo as the pin. It is a high quality T-shirt available in sizes from Medium to XX-Large. The shirts are \$10 each plus shipping.

If you would like to order either item or both, please let me know by e-mail or phone call *soon*. These items go fast and we must get our order in early.

More on Field Day in the coming weeks so get those operating skills honed and practice calling "CQ Field Day from N2SF . . . please copy 4 Alpha East New York".

Limited Time Only! Come See Your Club Spotlighted on the ARRL Website!

WECA is the main attraction of the ARRL Special Service Club web page until early March. Notable Special Service Clubs from around the country are spotlighted for brief periods on that page. WECA is honored to receive mention on this venerable page. The page includes a brief history of the club, prepared by WECA President Stan Rothman, WA2NRV, as well as a listing of its current activities and photos of events. Check out this page:

<http://www.remote.arrl.org/FandES/field/club/sscspot/2001/0221/?nc=1>.

Who Was The World's First Ham? Could It Be Guglielmo Marconi? By Dan Calabrese, AA2HX

The No.1 ham of all time must be an Italian student who was barely twenty years old in 1894. While vacationing in the Alps he found a copy of a magazine containing a description of some experiments made a few years previously by a young German professor named Heinrich Hertz. Hertz had set up two large loops of wire at opposite sides of his laboratory. To one he connected a pair of metal rods in a line, with the ends separated a fraction of an inch. To the other loop he added identical rods and to them connected a Ruhmkorff high-voltage induction coil, a device that later became the heart of the ignition systems of early automobiles. When the coil was energized by a large battery, sparks jumped across both gaps in unison. Since there was no physical connection between the loops, it was clear that electrical energy was bridging the space across the lab.

A budding scientist with a sharp, inquiring mind, the student reasoned that the range of transmission could be increased if the radiating element were made larger and the receiver made more sensitive. Who was this bright lad? Guglielmo Marconi. In the public mind, Marconi is generally regarded as the inventor of wireless telegraphy. This view is not fair either to him or to the many other experimenters who preceded him. Actually, what he did was to take some laboratory playthings out of the labs and into the field – literally into the field-and put them to work for practical communication through space. His key contribution was the addition of an antenna system consisting of a long, high wire connected to one side of the transmitter and another wire buried in the ground and connected to the other side. To this day a grounded aerial is called simply a Marconi.

Details of Marconi's equipment filled the technical press, and very quickly amateur radio became a popular hobby. Displaying great ingenuity, early hams assembled very successful stations out of odds and ends: milk bottles covered with tinfoil from cigarette boxes, to act as capacitors; plumbers copper tubing formed into a helix, as transmitter tuning coils; spark coils from Model T Fords, for high voltage; No.6 dry batteries from house bell systems, as a "power" source; oatmeal boxes wound with bell wire, as receiving tuning coils; bits of coal, as crystal detectors. Spark transmitters, which were limited to code operation, were superseded rapidly after World War 1 by tube-type equipment, which provided voice as well as code capability. Using mostly homemade gear, hams were the first to demonstrate the great possibilities of short radio waves, previously considered absolutely useless. Hams love challenges and have a great record of winning them. And remember that this is all a labor of love, the fruits of which are shared by the whole fraternity.

Virtual QSL's: Something New Brought to Amateur Radio from Cyberspace

Editor's Note: The WECAGRAM has received a notice of a new service for hams, called "virtual QSL's." The transmission of postal letters has moved aggressively into the medium of e-mail: why not QSL card dispatching, which is both expensive and cumbersome, particularly for DX amateurs.

The WECAGRAM was sent the following dispatch from Michael Paris, KA9TND, about a new service which he is offering on a website. The WECAGRAM was asked to include a blurb about VQSL, and because it seems to be an interesting concept worthy of readers' consideration, an excerpt of KA9TND's message is quoted below. The dispatch is printed without any endorsement by WECA, the WECAGRAM or its editor, merely for the sake of the information and possible use by WECAGRAM readers.

Your editor has not reviewed the veracity of this message nor the website, and takes no responsibility for such veracity.

QUOTE

My name is Michael Paris (KA9TND)...The reason for this message is to make you aware of a new service for Amateur Radio Operators: a virtual QSL card service.

<http://www.vqsl.net>

There is NEVER a charge for ANY service on VQSL! It is simply our way of giving something back to ham radio. This service is totally free and no money is ever solicited for any of the online services found there.

VQSL was designed to help the QSL effort when friends and I myself saw some outrageous prices on postage for some far away DX contacts.

VQSL Offers the Following Services Free To Any Amateur Radio Operator.

- Create & Send High Quality QSL Cards POSTAGE FREE
- Submit Pictures For Personalized Cards
- Online DX Chat Rooms designed for making radio contact
- Free Web Hosting
- Free Email Account
- Lookup DX Contact Email Addresses
- CQ Contests - Win NICE Prizes

(the contest for March will be a new 2 meter hand held)

Note: If you know any blind radio operators, be sure to tell them that we designed the site with them in mind. We have a large group of blind users that enjoy surfing through our easy to use, blind-friendly menu system.

VQSL is easy for anyone to use and offered to those that want to have fun, and also save on postage and send a high quality QSL card that can be printed and added to their collection right away (most times the same day as the QSO).

On VQSL there is a growing selection of picture categories and different formats that allow the operator to create a quality online QSL card within minutes. Then with one click of a button, the VQSL card is emailed and reaches the DX contact within seconds. (If the email address is unknown, it will remain on the site for your contact to pick up later)

(Personal pictures can also be used to give your card a more personal touch.)

Full instructions are given on how to design and setup your first web page, how to find email addresses of your DX contacts and how to design Virtual QSL cards. Email technical support is also offered.

If you have any questions please feel free to contact me directly (ka9tnd@vqsl.net). Also, feel free to visit <http://www.vqsl.net>.

Thank you for your time,
73's --- Michael KA9TND

P.S. You might also want to make your members aware that online QSL cards are not official with some groups without being sent through the snail mail system, ([for award or] contest credit) but a great way to have fun, take a load off sorting and save a few bucks at the same time.
UNQUOTE

Readers' comments about the VQSL concept and/or its website services will be warmly welcomed. Please e-mail them to wecagram@weca.org.

You're A Good Communicator... How About Using the WECAGRAM?

You surely know how to communicate (isn't that what amateur radio is all about?). How about sharing that burning issue, or just an interesting tidbit, with your WECA buddies? It's easier than a 220-way QSO and a great way to rise up out of the QRM. Personal stories are of great interest, and (who knows?) you may arouse a fond memory or a hearty laugh from a fellow ham. Grammar and spelling are no bars to fame in the WECAGRAM; that's why editors were invented!

Send your submission, *magnum opus* or one-liner, to the Editor at wecagram@weca.org. There...don't you feel like writing in now? (*de your Editor, Mike K2NR*)



**Next Membership Meeting:
March 12 at 8:00 pm
County Center, White Plains
Speaker: N4OOX on Bylaws**

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

Congratulations to William Lloyd Leslie (aka "Wires"), KC2FYY, for upgrading to General Class.

A special thank you to these members who recently renewed their memberships: AE2F and N2XRC.

Keep those updates coming in!

73, Angelina KC2COR

**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, April 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.

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

The following public-service activities are scheduled:

- Sunday, April 29th: March of Dimes, Mt. Kisco.
- Sunday, June 3rd: American Diabetes Tour-de-Cure bicycle ride, SUNY Purchase.
- Saturday night, July 14th: NY Philharmonic at Westchester Community College, Valhalla.

Please ask your entertainment/event planner and/or your better half to put these events on your calendar so you can reserve it to come out and play "ham." And don't forget: PLEASE SIGN UP in good time to participate. Call me at (914) 949-4231, see me at the membership meeting or e-mail me at n2tse@weca.org for further information.

73, Robert N2TSE

*Remember:
"Emergency Communications"
is WECA's middle name!*

Learn more and maintain readiness. Contact Alan N2YGK or Joe WB2VVS for more information.



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