



# 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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## ARRL Offers Amateur Radio Emergency Communications Courses

ARRL has announced its offering of three levels of on-line courses for amateur radio emergency communications: introductory (Level I), intermediate (Level II) and the new advanced (Level III). These courses are available for on-line registration, although they will have printed manuals and exams made up that will permit classroom, as well as on-line, administration.

All kinds of emergency communications issues are covered in the courses, which must be taken in Level I-II-III sequence. Registration for the on-line Level I course opens on Monday, December 10 at 4 p.m. EST, and for the Level II course on Monday, December 17 at the same time. Starting in January, the course registration for Level I will open at that hour on the first Monday of every month, followed by the Level II opening on the second Monday and the Level III opening on the third Monday. ARRL members pay \$40 for course registration, which costs non-ARRL members \$70.

The on-line "distance learning" method will be used. The courses are guided by a mentor who supervises the study of ten students via Internet communications. Printed versions are now available for in-person courses to be given by qualified club members and other persons for the first two levels, while Level III materials are expected to be available in the next few weeks.

ARRL certification is offered for each level, which may be earned by taking the course either on-line or in a classroom and completing all course activities and assessments (three 25-question assessments for Level I and one assessment each for Levels II and III). Self-study and life experience may also earn certification by completion of the respective assessments for each level with "Certification Examiners," who are so appointed by ARRL much as VE's are appointed by the ARRL/VEC for administering licensing exams.

Interested candidates should consult the website <http://www.arrl.org/cce/> for further information and instructions for registration.

## Take a Number: FCC Begins Mandatory Use of FRN's

The FCC has created yet another number to identify its licensees and those with whom it does business: the FCC Registration Number, or FRN. Every application, whether on-line or paper, filed with the FCC—including amateur license upgrades, renewals, modifications, and even changes of address now require listing the FRN or a social security number on the application.

Most hams who have obtained, modified or renewed their licenses with FCC in the past two years, or who have otherwise registered in the Universal Licensing System (ULS) have been issued an FRN. Notification of the FRN was mailed to most of such hams sometime in the past year. Hams may learn their number via a license inquiry at <http://wireless.fcc.gov/uls/>, or may obtain a number via the same website. The old Licensee ID number (a nine-character code beginning with the letter "L") continues to be shown on the license record but should no longer be used on applications.

## Mail Bonding: On-Line FCC Applications the Way to Go

In a related matter, hams are advised that the FCC is delaying opening its postal mail and moving the delivery location away from its Gettysburg office to a remote location in Gettysburg. Vanity call-sign applications that are mailed in are given the same priority as those submitted on-line by FCC policy: therefore, *both* types of applications are subject to delays. The routine processing time for vanity applications is 18 days once processing begins, i.e. when the letters are opened and submitted to FCC clerks.

To avoid mail-handling delays, hams are urged to submit routine FCC amateur applications, such as renewals, administrative updates (for address changes), etc. *on-line* via <http://wireless.fcc.gov/uls/>. Such applications are now normally turned around overnight, and the updates/renewals will be posted on the FCC website during the next business day.

# 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 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 2001-June 2002

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<b>Repeater Operations</b>	Dwight P. Smith, N2FMC

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 #16: Fight SAVI or Be Savvy?

One of the sorriest conditions in the world today is the West Bank issue in the Middle East. Two proud and ancient peoples, Jews and Arab Muslims, are essentially fighting an ancient battle for land and supremacy over desolate, arid space. I visited the Jordan Valley on the West Bank in 1992, and was surprised to see the relative sparseness of population and cultivation there. Surely, how could there have been so much bitterness and bloodshed over such "inhospitable" land? Why can't these two peoples learn to live together in the same land?

I thought of that when I got my December issue of QST recently. Its editorial talked about the "grave threat" to the amateur bands offered by so-called "Part 15 devices," named after the section of FCC regulations devoted to these devices, which are unlicensed radio transmitters that share frequency bands with licensed services. Part 15 devices include remote controls for appliances and other intermittent transmitters of low power. By contrast, the amateur radio service, or "Part 97" service, is a licensed, non-commercial service. Every ham clearly likes the freedom of amateur frequency bands, while at the same time appreciates the convenience of Part 15 devices.

Along comes a company out of Silicon Valley called SAVI Technology, Inc., which makes radio-frequency identification (RFID) tags operating under Part 15 provisions for inventory control and tracking of transportation vehicles like cargo containers. Unfortunately, they chose 433.9 MHz as an operating frequency for a number of reasons, including a favorable trade-off between operating range, tag size and cost and availability of the frequency for the intended use overseas. Because this frequency lies on the 70-cm ham band, SAVI maybe was not so savvy in making its choice. Regardless, SAVI has petitioned the FCC to allow its tags to operate with greater interference potential than is now allowed under Part 15 rules so as to enhance their value to commercial users. The SAVI folks have proven savvy enough to win the FCC to their side for the moment.

It's natural that some people might see the West Bank issue in black-and-white: one cannot be a Jew and a Muslim at the same time. In the SAVI situation, I have a unique perspective: I have been involved professionally with technical standards for cargo containers for over two decades, and one of the prime uses of the SAVI tag is for tracking cargo containers in marine terminals and repair depots. I understand the reasonable, practical user requirements for the tags and the international nature of container operations. In fact, I belong to an international ISO standards committee that is right now exploring whether to enshrine a multi-frequency tag of the SAVI type in international standard. I am also proud to be a ham of nearly four-decades standing, and understand that ham operations on 70-cm are given priority by virtue of strict licensure requirements.

ARRL is engaged in a lobbying war to defend the ham band against the RFID tag interlopers. Is there any hope of compromise, or are ARRL and SAVI irremediably loaded for bear? Which is the more crucial public need: commercial enhancement of transportation or amateurs' emergency service, experimentation and hobby communications? As a start, both sides need to attain an understanding of the needs of the other. SAVI may dismiss hams as a bunch of hobbyists with lots of frequency alternatives, but headlines like the ARRL editorial's "Unlicensed to Kill" do not help either. Drawing lines in the sand over every possible shared use of portions of ham bands is not good politics, especially in the present climate in Washington. For better or worse, lobbying is a necessary evil in the American system of government regulation, but if lobbying replaces cooperative negotiation, the side with the richest war chest will usually win. As the side that is forbidden to make money from radio operations, hams have the most to lose.

73, Mike K2NR

## From the President... By Stan Rothman, WA2NRV

“Tis the season to be jolly” or, as we call it in WECA, “Ham Happy.” The next is the last meeting of the year. It is a special meeting, as you will see on December 10<sup>th</sup>, 7:30 p.m., at the Westchester County Center.

We have confirmed meeting dates for the 2002. The meetings will occur on the second Monday of each month except for October and November. In those months, meetings will be on the first Monday, due to holidays occurring the following weeks.

Our membership offers condolences to Mike K2NR on the passing of his mother. We wish Mike and his family many happy memories to make life easier.

Angelina KC2COR has worked long hours with keyboard in hand to update WECA records. It was such a strain on her eyes that she had them surgically improved to be able to follow the cursor without being distracted by glasses. We hope the recovery is quick for you.

Get-well wishes also go to Emily AC2V, who is now home recuperating after a visit to the hospital. The high point of her hospital stay was the visits from her doctor, Rich WB2QJA.

Robert N2TSE will remind you about Santa’s visit to Blythedale this month. We will hear, via our 147.060 repeater, happy moments in time, for children who are long-term patients. As you know, we need the financial assistance from our membership to continue this program year after year.

I want to remind you about our WECA Elmer program. If you have questions about any aspect of amateur radio or need equipment from the WECA loan closet, for a short-term loan, contact Fran N2OLU.

Remember the Southern District Net meetings each evening at 9:30 p.m. on the 147.060 repeater. During the holiday season, there is a lot of traffic into and out of the WECA area. You do not have to be an experienced traffic handler to become involved.

I look forward to seeing all of you at the December meeting.  
Happy holidays and a healthy New Year.

73, Stan WA2NRV

*Happy Holidays and  
Peace in the New Year*

## WECA Ops Make the Hajj: Visit to ARRL Headquarters in Newington, CT



Shown above are WECA members Russ Stevenson, N2AMP; Bob Muller, KC2FYZ and Ron Devenuti, N2TJE at the operating position of ARRL headquarters station W1AW in Newington, CT. on October 24.

They got the grand tour at ARRL but had no time to operate the famous station. Too bad: guess it must have been like making the pilgrimage to Mecca but not getting a chance to pray...

### ***Remember the World Trade Center and “Amateur Radio’s Finest Hour:”***

Learn more about emergency response and maintain your emergency communications skills and readiness. Contact Alan N2YGK or Joe WB2VVS for more information.

***“Emergency Communications”  
is WECA’s middle name!***



**Next Membership Meeting:  
Monday, Jan. 14 at 8:00 pm  
County Center, White Plains**

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

Please welcome a new WECA member, K8PET.  
John L. Orr, of Ardsley, NY.

All members will be receiving the WECA roster with this issue of the WECAGRAM. Please let me know if there are any errors in your listing that require correction.

I would also like to remind everyone who has changed his/her e-mail address recently to notify me of the correct address. There have been a lot of rejections of incorrect e-mail addresses this week on the WECA reflector. The WECA reflector system for e-mails, which directs e-mails addressed to "(your call)@weca.org" to your actual e-mail box, depends on accurate e-mail addresses for you to provide service to the membership.

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

On November 18<sup>th</sup> at Mamaroneck Harbor Island Park, WECA had 20 members help the local Parks Department with its annual 5K run, called the "Turkey Trot." WECA operators assisting included: N2 AMP,CAV,DHH,NAA, OLU,TJE,TSE,WQG; WA2NRV; WB2NHC, KC2 CLZ,COQ,ESU,GWK,GYP; K2 DFJ,QCF; K4ZGE; KB2 LLV,NBN. Thanks to them, the Trot was a communications success.

Please don't forget the following important event:  
*Wednesday, Dec. 19, 6 p.m.:* Santa Claus visits Blythedale Children's Hospital, Valhalla.

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](mailto:n2tse@weca.org) for further information.

***Want to see your call 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 13th, 7:00 pm**, at our NEW location:  
Westchester County Fire Training Center  
4 Dana Road, Valhalla, NY.  
Good luck from Sandy N2SF and the WECA VE team.



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