



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 26, Issue 6

January, 2002

Feedback on Use of 70-cm Ham Band For RFID Tags Shows Lively Interest

Last month's editorial #16, about the competition for use of a portion of the 70-cm amateur band between private business RF identification tag users and the amateur community, generated some commentary, including an e-mail from Dave Sumner, K1ZZ, Executive VP of ARRL, dated December 17. The issue of whether Part 15 (unlicensed incidental use) devices can co-exist with licensed amateur radio use continues to be significant. Mr. Sumner's comments follow:

Dear Mike,

I just received the December issue of The WECAGRAM and would like to comment on your column.

To be brief, we have no quarrel with RF ID technology per se. It is simply a question of suitable vs. unsuitable operating frequencies. SAVI's contention that 433 MHz is an appropriate frequency for use worldwide is simply not true; even in Europe, where the use of the frequency by low-power devices originated as a result of the unfortunate WARC-79 "country footnote" that designates it for ISM applications in a few countries, it is not available for use at the duty cycles sought by SAVI. The 868/915 MHz combination is a better bet.

We're not guilty of opposing every possible shared use -- for example, we negotiated appropriate sharing of 2390-2400 MHz with unlicensed asynchronous PCS.

73,
David Sumner, K1ZZ

Following was the Editor's response to the above e-mail, which was transmitted to Mr. Sumner by e-mail on Dec. 18:

Dave, thanks for your comments. I'm sure that ARRL is not quarreling with the RFID technology, but my unique perspective as someone who has interfaced with SAVI people professionally on this project, and as a long-time interested ham, leads me to believe that there is no black-

and-white positions here that will carry the day. The American freight transport industry has used 433 MHz for years with read-only RF tags without apparent incident, and I think it is a bad idea to imply that "the sky is falling" on the basis of frequency incursion alone.

We all know that the Bush administration is very pro-business, so a "nix" attitude on the part of the amateur radio community, in my opinion, will not get too far with the FCC. Better to go in with a cooperative attitude toward a "win-win" resolution if possible. FYI, I was at a meeting with SAVI in the fall of 2000 and told them that the 433 MHz intended use would surely result in conflicts with hams, and that needed to be dealt with. SAVI chose to ignore this warning, and now they must reap what they sowed. My point is not that ARRL are the bad guys, just that both sides should try to see the other guy's point of view before loading the cannons...

73, Mike Arrow K2NR
WECAGRAM Editor

Mr. Sumner indicated in a December 18 follow-up that "It's the duty cycle they want that's the problem," not "that 'the sky is falling' on the basis of frequency alone.

Joe Bruno, WB2VVS, a WECA member and the coordinator of RACES in Westchester, also remarked about current active amateur use of the 70-cm band:

I found your article about SAVI in the WECAGram very interesting. Although I didn't find the metaphor of "desolate, arid space" and 440 MHz quite resonant, the notion of negotiating a compromise in this case was not one that would have occurred to me. Your comment, "the side with the richest war chest will usually win," is sad but true. All one has to do is look at Microsoft's legal shenanigans and their "buying" the U.S. government to see that. Let's hope THEY don't go after our spectrum for a few years!

Back when the phrase "220, use it or lose it." was being said, many of us hams didn't use 220 very much... As you know, UPS was able to take HALF of the band away from Amateur Radio.
(continued on Page 3)

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.

Copyright © 2001 Westchester Emergency Communications Association, Inc. The WECAGRAM may be quoted without prior permission, provided proper credit is given to WECA, the WECAGRAM and the author of the quoted article. WECA would appreciate receiving a copy of all publications that include quotes from the WECAGRAM.

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

OFFICERS:

President	Stanley Rothman, WA2NRV
Executive VP	Robert Muller, KC2FYZ
VP/General Counsel	Michael J. Weitzner, N2EJI
Treasurer	Andrew R. Farber, N4OOX
Secretary	Milton A. Galamison, KC2GWK
Trustee	Paul S. Vydareny, WB2VUK
President Emeritus	Joseph Brown, KB2NBN

DIRECTORS:

Activities	Jim Faulkner, N2WQG
County Liaison	Raymond Albanese, N2FXU
Digital Modes	Richard L. Benda, WB2QJA
Director-at-Large	Sanford H. Fried, N2SF
Education	Efrem Acosta, W2CZ
Emergency Services	Thomas R. Raffaelli, WB2NHC
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

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 #17: Amateur vs. Commercial Communications: Hams' Value

Last month's *Views from the Shack #16* dealt with the seemingly intractable conflict of views between commercial interests and the amateur radio community. Feedback from Dave Sumner, K1ZZ, the executive director of ARRL and our own Joe Bruno, WB2VVS, highlight the lively interest hams have always had in this subject. Joe's comments *vis-à-vis* commercial hunger for amateur allocations are published elsewhere in the WECAGRAM, but the conclusion of his letter is worth presenting here without further editorializing:

[S]peaking of reasons for [amateur radio's] existence, another is emergency communications. I continue to impress people when I tell them that ham radio was the only means of communications the Westchester Emergency Operations Center had with the NYC EOC that first night [of Sept. 11]. It is amazing, but no surprise to many of us. Hopefully, we will mention the role of "amateur" radio during our discussions about the loss of our frequencies. And, hopefully, we will continue to provide this service well after the needs of the September disaster have begun to fade.

Those hams who are able to assist the general public in getting messages to friends and loved ones will also play a role in the future. Many think this service is no longer of use. Recently I read about a federal government request to the cell phone companies. The request is to block ALL but governmental and emergency services use of cell phones during emergencies. Thousands, if not millions, of citizens not in these categories would potentially need or want to contact others who are not in the effected areas. Ham radio may be able to fill SOME of this need via messages or even the old fashioned "phone patch." Even those of us who have let our "autopatch" privileges expire due to our easy access to cell phones, may need to reconsider this valuable resource that our repeaters can provide.

In summary, I see many challenges for ham radio ahead, and hope that we hams will be as prepared for them as we were for the World Trade Center disaster.

73, Joe

P.S. In case you were wondering, your Editor is not now, nor has he ever been, directly involved with the SAVI RFID tag controversy as a partisan. In fact, he has left the cargo container industry last month and is now working in another industry. Nevertheless, tracking of transportation equipment will continue to be an important issue for industry, so we hams should maintain both vigilance against band incursion and an open mind about the possibilities for sharing of amateur spectrum with commercial users on a non-interference basis.

73, Mike K2NR

From the President... By Stan Rothman, WA2NRV

Happy New Year to all WECA members, and a sincere wish for a healthy year. I am sure that you have heard New Year greetings from everyone under the sun. Some of them with very little emotion behind it. You can be assured that when you hear it from a WECA member, it is sincere. We have proven, by our prior experiences, how much we care for our fellow hams and the public at large.

Now that we are at the beginning of a new year, it is time to press forward to fulfill WECA's goals. The WECA board members have spent considerable time trying to develop a well-rounded program for WECA. In order to provide the best for our members, your input is required. What direction would you like to see WECA take this year? Are there special areas you feel would enhance the quality of membership? What would you like to change or improve during this year? Your input is critical to the life of WECA.

I hope you had an opportunity to listen to Santa Claus as he visited the children at Blythedale via the WECA repeater. Santa's elves handed out gifts to the children while they spoke to Santa. That is probably one of the most heart-wrenching as well as rewarding WECA projects each year.

Robert N2TSE is keeping us prepared for situations where emergency communications are required, such as the World Trade Center disaster. We proved that all the walks, runs, trots, etc, he had scheduled for us, gave us the experience required to provide needed communications on short notice and sustained over a long period of time. I want to thank you for all you have contributed over the past year and look forward to working with you this year.

In order to stay informed you should attend our monthly meetings. WECA VP Bob KC2FYZ is always accepting suggestions for monthly speakers or program subjects. Keep Angelina KC2COR current with all your information, including your e-mail address. Also, check the WECA web site, www.weca.org, for the latest information.

I look forward to seeing all of you at the next WECA meeting, on January 14th at the County Center in White Plains. The social half-hour starts at 7:30 pm, followed by the meeting at 8:00 pm. The scheduled speaker is Anthony N2NWZ who will demonstrate Amateur TV.

73, Stan WA2NRV

*Happy Holidays and
Peace in the New Year*

Feedback (continued from Page 1)

Joe Bruno's (WB2VVS) comments continue:
In the case of 440, hams DO use it. Try putting up a coordinated 440 repeater! I know a ham who has unsuccessfully attempted to do so for many years. The SAVI use may not kill ham's use of 440, but will make things a bit more crowded. If we attempt a "cooperative negotiation" with SAVI, what effect will this have on the current request of UPS to take some of 440 away from ham radio? Sadly, I'm afraid we will lose once again to UPS, given their past success and your observation about "war chests." No amount of money that hams can raise will compete with what UPS can supply.

What makes things even more disturbing is the recent sale of frequencies in perpetuity, further reducing the available spectrum. Remember back when the radio spectrum used to be considered a public resource that was managed by the Communications Act of 1934 and the Federal Communications Commission?

Given a long term view, however, hams have consistently been kicked off our own frequencies. This has been after our experimentation has proven them useable. We then found methods of using unusable frequencies. Once again, we may have to find ways to make "unusable" frequencies useful to us. While this is not an easy task by any means, it is one of the reasons for our existence. (Remember that phrase that says, "Enhance the state of the art...") Many of us are satisfied to wait for commercial developments and then use them in amateur radio.

ARES News: Meeting on January 12

All hams interested in emergency communications are invited to a section-wide in-person ARES meeting on Saturday, January 12, 2002 at the Central Hudson building in Kingston, NY (Ulster County). Road Directions: Exit #19 off of the NYS Thruway. Bear right at the end of the ramp and follow signs for Rt.28. That will take you over Rt.209 and you make the right hand turn at Johnson Ford. Central Hudson is behind that building on the left. Talk-In will be on 147.255+/R (No PL) and 146.745-/R (PL=123).

We will be covering a variety of topics, including an open discussion on the World Trade Center disaster relief efforts. All of you who participated are especially invited to attend and to share with the rest of us your experiences and critique. If there is any particular topic that you would like to see on the agenda, please let me know and I'll be happy to add it on. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to give me a shout.

73 and wishing everyone happy and safe holidays,
Ken Akasofu, KL7JCQ
ARRL Eastern New York Section Emergency Coordinator



Next Membership Meetings:
Monday, Jan. 14 at 8:00 pm
Speaker: Anthony N2NWZ
On Amateur Television
Monday, Feb. 11 at 8:00 pm
County Center, White Plains

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

Please welcome new WECA members Glenn J. Zemanek, KC2FZV, of Hartsdale, NY and David H. Jameson, WQ2S, of Chappaqua, NY.

I would also like to remind everyone who has changed his/her e-mail address recently to notify me of the correct address. 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. Please help me help you, the WECA membership, by supplying current information. Thanks!

73, Angelina KC2COR

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

On Wednesday, December 19, Santa came to call on the children confined to Blythedale Hospital in Valhalla. As usual, WECA provided helpers to Santa on his important business of talking to the kids via amateur radio and distributing presents. Here are Santa's helpers call signs/identification:

K2 RRR,ZVI (& Fred, his nephew);
 KA2BRH; KB2LLV; KC2 ESU,FNU,FYY (and his mother, sister Suzanne and brother Jason);
 N2 AMP,TFC,TJE,TSE,YRU; WA2KHR and WB2NHC.
 Thanks to all from the staff & kids at Blythedale.

P.S. Santa also says "thanks" for the help.

Don't forget to sign up for 2002 events. Call me at (914) 949-4231, see me at the membership meeting or e-mail me at 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, February 14th, 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.



Westchester Emergency
Communications Association, Inc.

Post Office Box 831
 Sleepy Hollow, New York 10591-0831

RUSH -- DATED MATERIAL
PLEASE DO NOT DELAY