



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 9

April, 2002

Diligence By N. R. Hams Pays Off

Two New Rochelle hams teamed up with ARRL Hudson Division leadership and helped convince New Rochelle city officials to retain the pre-existing amateur tower height regulations in the newly revised zoning ordinance. Frank Fallon, N2FF, ARRL Hudson Division Director, reinforced efforts begun by Gerry Agliata, W2GLA and WECAGRAM Editor Mike Arrow, K2NR, both of whom live in New Rochelle. According to Frank, Gerry and Mike, "who spotted the potential problem last May, were able to meet with city officials EARLY - before they had public hearings. As the result of four meetings with town officials and one with the mayor, we were able to convince them to leave the height at 75 feet." In addition, the minimum setback of towers from the property line was kept to half the height of the tower, instead of the 100 percent setback originally proposed by New Rochelle. This provision would have made it impossible for most hams to erect a tower.

The team of amateurs warned city officials that the proposed restrictions would have led to many more future amateur antennas being placed on roofs in New Rochelle. This convinced a key City Council member to discourage roof antennas, and instead to favor crank up towers. Such an alternative needs to have a larger base than guyed towers. As a result, the final ordinance allows a four-foot-by-four-foot base for retractable towers and three feet-six inches square for stationary or permanent towers.

All involved felt that it was a win-win situation. Frank cautioned, "it never would have happened if we did not learn early about the proposed changes. Had no one noticed until the public hearing, we never would have been able to negotiate over a period of six months a successful outcome. Please keep your eyes open in your community for ordinance revisions and find out what they propose to do about communications towers. Let us know, early, about proposed ordinances."

CALLING ARES OPERATORS:

There will be a large emergency management drill in Yonkers on Wednesday, May 15th from 8 am to 2 pm. The American Red Cross in Westchester will be participating and will have a need for 6-12 ARES radio operators. If you are able to participate, please notify Alan N2YGK and copy

WECA Ops Among Those Recognized for Efforts on September 11 by ARRL

QST, the ARRL Journal, recognized the efforts of Eastern New York amateurs in the September 11 disaster recovery efforts in its April issue. The following is quoted from the QST issue: "Section Manager Pete Cecere, N2YJZ, said some 160 amateurs from the ARRL Eastern New York Section were among those responding to the New York City World Trade Center disaster. Volunteers worked via the Westchester Emergency Communications Association (WECA), which served as a staging point for all volunteers arriving from north of the city."

Under the direction of Eastern New York Section Emergency Coordinator Ken Akasofu, KL7JQC, three District Emergency Co-coordinators – [WECA member] Joe Bruno, WB2VVS; Frank Stone, KB2YUR; and George Odom, KB2SIY-facilitated the staging of volunteers to the Westchester County staging area to await assignment.

"We're very fortunate to have so many hams in our section who have a tremendous amount of expertise and have demonstrated such a high level of dedication and professionalism," Akasofu said. "Their investment of time participating in public service events, local and section-level nets, SETs, and other training activities has really paid off."

Akasofu said the magnitude of the disaster even affected telephone service outside of the Greater New York City area for a time. "To get around this, we arranged for some of the Eastern New York Official Emergency Stations to be on standby," he said. "They were far enough away from the area so that their phone lines weren't affected, and they had the capability to reach the [WECA 147.060] repeater used by the staging area in Westchester."

In addition, the WECA club organization was cited as a key responder in the QST article. Description of the WECA response was included in QST by its reprint of a lengthy excerpt taken from the feature article "WECA Operators Shine in the Gloom of WTC Disaster," published in the October 2001 WECAGRAM.

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 © 2002 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 #20 WECA Offers Heroic Opportunities

As the six-month mark after the tragedy of September 11 approaches, the April *QST* revisited the contributions of hams on that fateful day. WECA received its merited, though long overdue, kudos for its actions. I am humbled that *QST* quoted at length from the feature article about WECA's response to the disaster, prepared for and included in the October 2001 issue of the WECAGRAM. While it is always gratifying to see one's own words quoted in *QST*, it is especially nice that our devoted operators and our ham brethren in Westchester were recognized for their persistence, skill and capability.

WECA shined that day and continues to shine, but it cannot fulfill its potential without devoted leadership as well as unselfish and skilled member-operators. As WECA approaches elections for Officers and Directors in the 2002-03 year, the Nominating Committee is in high gear seeking qualified candidates for maintaining WECA's legacy and moving the club forward. Just the maintenance effort takes lots of work by dedicated members, but it is rewarded not just in *QST* encomiums but also in the feeling of providing invaluable help when we are most needed by the community.

In particular, our very devoted Public Service Director, Robert Kantor, N2TSE, is in particular need of operators during the busy spring event season. Please consider volunteering for public-service events, which are the practical training backbone of WECA's readiness when the worst happens. Participating in public service events helps make WECA a hero in the minds of the local communities in the Westchester area, not just when we do the big things for the larger area. Just like acorns, big heroes from little ones grow...

Don't forget the Skywarn program, for tracking those natural disasters that can come to us at any time with the weather. Sandro N2TWN, our own WECA member and devoted Skywarn manager as well as the net controller of the Southern District Net, always needs to have more trained and certified watchers at the ready. The National Weather Service recognizes the usefulness of hams in the critical task of watching the heavens for storms and more serious potential disasters. WECA helps encourage that worthy effort to be staffed, too.

Whatever is your favored avenue to communications heroism, or even just a communications "helper-out," WECA has something in store just for you. Who knows...we might just be needed when our fiber-optic telephone backbone turns back into sand. (Just kidding, folks...see page 3 for a bit of fun.)

73, Mike K2NR

From the President... By Stan Rothman, WA2NRV

April flowers should bring May flowers, BUT this year it might not happen. With the lack of rain and snow this year, we are in the middle of a difficult situation. It could affect us as communicators with the need for fire watches, and special projects where the county could use our experience and assistance.

I had an opportunity to travel to a third-world area recently and was amazed by the living conditions as well as the lack items that we take for granted every day. One thing I did notice were the foreigners living there as educators, medical providers, and clergy, providing a link to the outside world via amateur radio.

VP Bob KC2FYZ arranged for a return visit by the West Mountain Group, this time hopefully without snow. They will have the Rigblasters and some new equipment to show us. It should be an interesting presentation again.

As you know, the nominating committee is looking for members who will guide our club into the future. To make it easier for them, please advise Mike K2NR, Nick K2ZVI or Bob WA2KHR which position would pique your interest.

There will be a WECA VE session on April 11th at the Fire Training Center, 4 Dana Road, Valhalla. It starts at 8:00 pm. All VE's and test-takers are welcome. Now is your opportunity to upgrade before the new Extra Class test questions take effect.

WECAfest will be held on June 2nd at the Saxon Woods Pool parking lot. Mamaroneck Avenue White Plains, NY. Sandy N2SF and Jim N2WQG are heading up the operation. Now is the time to advise of your availability. Tell them what position you would like to fill.

Robert N2TSE also has an event for WECA members on June 2nd. We will need a lot of cooperation to do justice to both events.

Look skyward for a new challenge in amateur radio. With the new birds going up it is easier to work them with a dual-band HT. Have you challenged yourself recently?

I look forward to seeing all members at the Meeting Monday April 8, 2002. That is at the Westchester County Center White Plains, NY at 7:30PM with the social half hour before the meeting at 8:00PM

73, Stan WA2NRV

**"Make a Date to Laminate" Your Valued License
It costs just 50 cents. Contact Robert N2TSE.**

Fiber Optic Communications Doomed? Will Amateur Radio Be Ready ? By Norm Krajkowski, N2GKM

This is not a normal subject for a Club Newsletter but I felt this preliminary information should be shared with the Amateur Radio community as soon as possible because of its implications on the future of digital communications. I'm sharing this information in hopes that the ranks of Amateur Radio operators, once aware of this potential for a sudden failure of the worldwide Fiber Optic Networks, will take the steps necessary to be prepared to meet the challenges that they will face when radio is left as the only means of communications.

I've been involved with Fiber Optic communications for over twenty five years. The other day a distinguished colleague of mine, here at the "Labs" Research & Development Center, excitedly showed me a recently published paper in a Journal from the Fellowship for the Advanced Research of Coherent Emissions which discussed the discovery of a complex characteristic of Fiber Optics which could in time result in a change of the fiber composition from a transparent medium for coherent laser light emissions into a form that could actually impede the transmission of light waves.

I must admit the contents of the paper by Dr. I. M. von Guessin, a professor of Crystalline Physics at California State University (San Clemente) , were very profound, but I quickly realized the data, formulas and charts contained in the report were far more complex than I could handle. Fortunately that evening I happened to catch my colleague in his office as he was packing up for the day. I asked him if he could summarize the gist of the paper for me.

I was shocked when he said; "To put it simply: In time all fiber optic cables will experience a change in composition from glass to a form resembling their basic original structure: SAND !" This change could occur suddenly and is virtually impossible to predict." Unfortunately he said he couldn't stay to continue our discussion as he had to leave for a dinner engagement but promised he would keep me informed of any additional information if it became available.

I will pass on any information I obtain from the Foundation for the Advanced Research of Coherent Emissions (F.A.R.C.E.) via this newsletter if it ever becomes available. I'll also be sure to let you know if Dr. von Guessin's guess ever becomes reality.

(Editor's Note: For all of you stumped non-techies worrying about our fiber-optic network reverting back to sand:

APRIL FOOL!! Looks like fiber-optics are here to stay. Thanks to Norm and the Rochester VHF Group for sharing this fanciful article with WECA.)



Next Membership Meetings:
Monday, April 8 at 7:30 pm
Speaker: West Mtn. Radio
Monday, May 13 at 7:30 pm
County Center, White Plains

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

Please welcome our newest members, Robert Grambau, WW2RG, of Pleasantville (formerly WD8IZT of Michigan) and Frank Lauri, W2IX, of Carmel. Congrats to Steven C. Hunt, N2IYR, of Dobbs Ferry for upgrading to Extra Class.

Please don't forget to let me know whenever your e-mail address or call sign changes, whether or not you utilize the weca.org reflector service. This will allow quicker response and better membership service to you, our devoted WECA members.

My address is: Angelina R. Morgante, P. O. Box 253, Dobbs Ferry, NY 10522, or e-mail to kc2cor@weca.org. Thanks for your help!

73, Angelina KC2COR

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

Mark your calendars with the following WECA public service events, and plan on participating in at least one event:

- April 28th: March of Dimes walk in White Plains.
- June 2nd: American Diabetes bike tour "Tour de Cure" at Pace University in Pleasantville.
- Aug. 3rd: New York Philharmonic at Westchester Community College.

Please help WECA with communications support to aid public safety and to train for disasters.

Don't forget to sign up for these 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, April 11th, 7:00 pm, at the 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**