



# WECAgram

*Serving the Public through Amateur Radio and Serving Amateurs since 1972*

**A Monthly Newsletter for Members and Associates**

**October 2005**

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will be on Tuesday October 11

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## Public Service Events

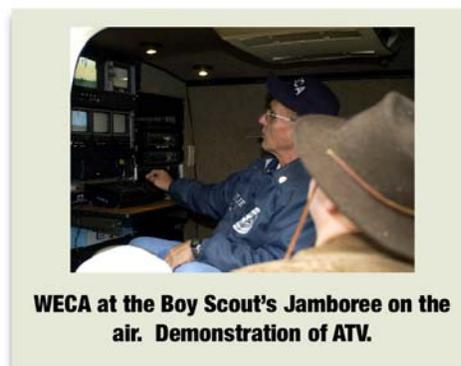
Robert, N2TSE has organized several public service events for the Fall. The first, The Golden Apple Bike Tour, was held at Goldens Bridge NY starting bright and early at 6:00 AM. With more than 1,000 riders, 4 rest stops, three S.A.G's and two shadows, we had our hands full! The S.A.Gs had APRS units on board with a net control to keep track of them.

We used both the WECA and PEARL repeaters to cover the northern Westchester and Putnam county areas. Many thanks to PEARL for their help!

The WECA members who participated include: a2sk, wb2nhc, kc2mff, kc2gwk, kc2mpf, kc2fnu, kc2clz, n2amp & n2tse. Many thanks to all of them.

Two events are planned for October. The first is the Boy Scout's Jamboree on the Air (JOTA) at Croton Point Park on Saturday October 15th. That's

followed on October 23rd by the American Diabetes Walk.



On November 20th we will support the Mamaroneck Turkey Trot. Our annual Blythedale Children's Hospital visit will be December 14th starting at 5:30PM.

We hope you can sign up and participate in one or all of these events. They are great training, and provide valuable assistance to the served agency. Make sure you

check the website <http://www.weca.org> for the latest information and updates.

**Special Time!**

**Next Meeting is Tuesday, October 11th at 7PM at the County Center**



# Notes from Around WECA

## From the August and September Board Meetings



Some updates for the August and September Board meetings:

- More than 136 members have already renewed their membership for the 2005-2006 year. The board will decide upon the cut-off date for renewals at the October board meeting.
- ARES/RACES has been heavily involved with Westchester County to prepare the new Emergency Operations Center for the Indian Point Drills scheduled for this fall. So far, new radios have been installed in the old EOC with remote network connections connecting the radios to the new EOC. APRS tracking capabilities are also installed and operating.
- The next VE session will be in December.
- The Field Comm is nearing the end of its useful life. The board is actively investigating options for a new Field Communications Van. Anyone with contacts or ideas - please contact Tom, WB2NHC or Lyle, K2LCA.
- All members are welcome at the board meetings. The next board meeting is October 24th at 7:30PM at the Fire Training Center.

## Letter from the President



*It's been a long, hot, and dry summer. Hopefully the fall will bring us some needed rain and cooler temperatures.*

*Amateur radio has again proven its worth in Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. At this point, several hundred amateurs have responded and provided assistance to families and agencies in the area. One of our members is heading to the south now. We asked her to come back and tell us what she learned at a future meeting. If you are interested in volunteering, check the ARRL web site - they are the coordinating volunteers.*

*Our new board has been great. Lots of ideas, and a lot is getting done - including a new tower truck, better control of our existing assets, and a active public service calendar. My hat is off to all of you... now if I can only get a WECAGram out on time!*

*(Un)fortunately, my business has taken off like a rocket. If anyone would like to volunteer to take over the newsletter editorship from me, I would be eternally grateful. Let me know!*

*Regards,  
Lyle, K2LCA*

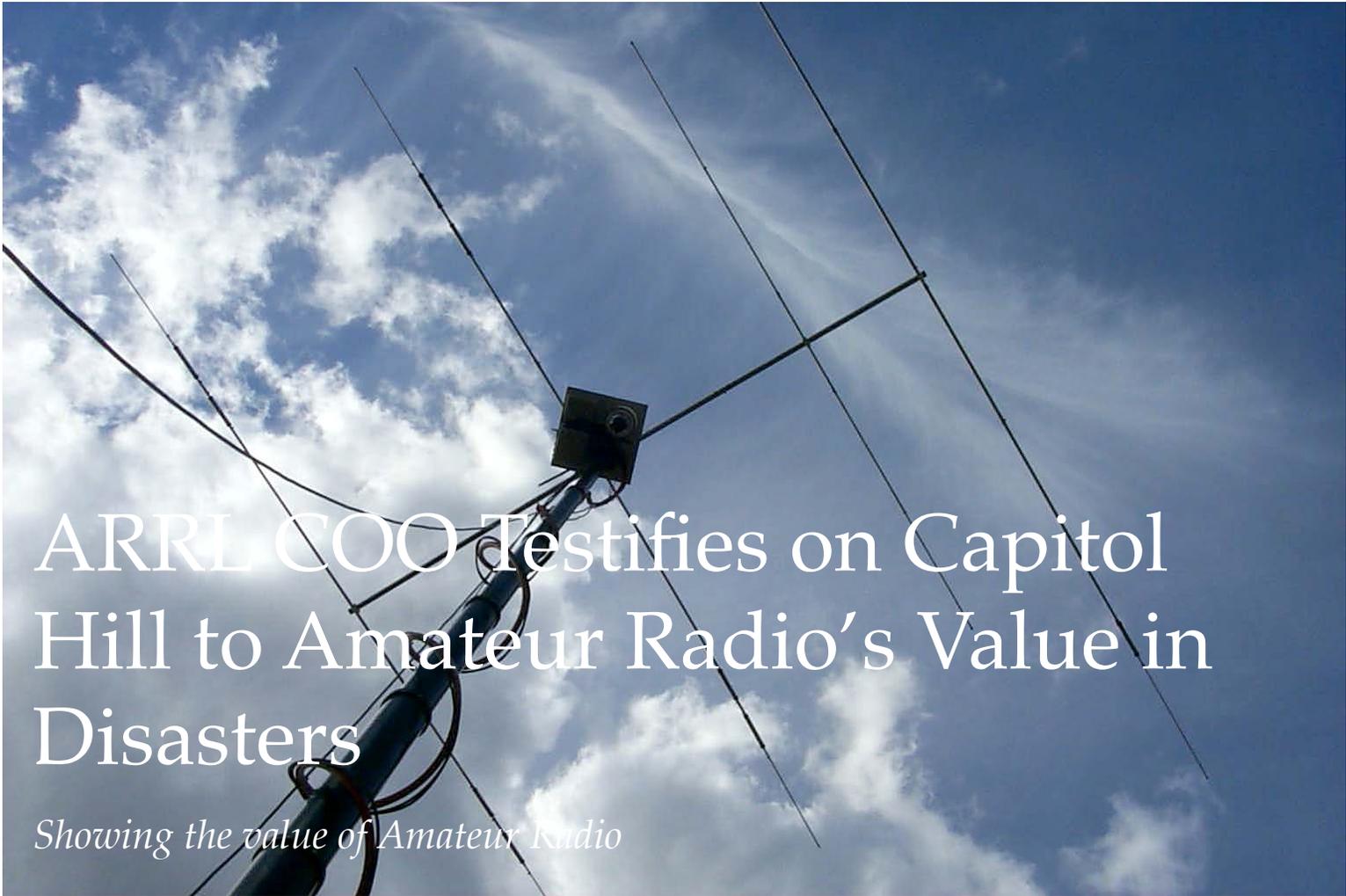
## Quick Notes



Nick Gallo, K2ZVI is compiling a list of members who have **HF capabilities for emergency use**. Please contact him at [k2zvi@weca.org](mailto:k2zvi@weca.org) with what bands you can operate and whether you have emergency power available.

Jim Faulkner, our Vice President, has invited Steve Mendelsohn to speak at our **October** member meeting. Steve will be talking about this year's New York City Marathon. In December, **Gene from KJI electronics** will be here to show us the latest stuff - just in time for the holidays!

Alan Crosswell, N2YGK, has a number of **RACES drills** planned with the county. Contact Alan at [kc2ygk@weca.org](mailto:kc2ygk@weca.org) for more information. And if you're not a RACES member, contact Alan to find out about joining.



# ARRL COO Testifies on Capitol Hill to Amateur Radio's Value in Disasters

*Showing the value of Amateur Radio*

NEWINGTON, CT, Sep 30, 2005--ARRL Chief Operating Officer Harold Kramer, WJ1B, testified on behalf of the League September 29 before the US House Subcommittee on Telecommunications and the Internet. Addressing the hearing topic, "Public Safety Communications from 9/11 to Katrina: Critical Public Policy Lessons," Kramer reiterated and amplified comments ARRL President Jim Haynie, W5JBP, delivered earlier this month to the House Government Reform Committee. As Haynie did on September 15, Kramer testified on the successful efforts of Amateur Radio operators who provided communications during the Hurricane Katrina response.

"Amateur Radio was uniquely suited to this task by virtue of the availability of HF communications covering long distances without fixed infrastructure," Kramer pointed out in his testimony. In addition to those who responded to support relief agencies in hurricane-devastated areas, thousands more radio amateurs outside the affected area monitored radio traffic and relayed health-and-welfare messages, he said.

Kramer noted that there's been a lot of discussion in recent years about public safety interoperability.

"The Amateur Radio Service provides a good deal of interoperability communications for first responders in disaster relief incidents," he told the subcommittee. He said ham radio is able to fill this crucial role because even the "interoperability channels" that exist in most Public Safety allocations are useless when the Public Safety communication infrastructure goes down.

"Interoperability, in short, presumes operability of Public Safety facilities," Kramer said. "While some 'hardening' of Public Safety facilities is called for, there is in our view an increasing role for decentralized, portable Amateur Radio stations which are not infrastructure-dependent in providing interoperability communication on site."

Kramer told Subcommittee Chairman Fred Upton (R-MI) and his House colleagues that Amateur Radio "is largely invisible to both the FCC and to Congress on a daily basis, because it is virtually self-regulating and self-administered," he said. "It is only during emergencies that the Amateur Radio Service is in the spotlight." Also testifying at the subcommittee session was FCC Chairman Kevin J. Martin, and Kramer said he had the opportunity to

introduce himself to the chairman before the subcommittee convened.

Martin also was on hand September 22nd when Haynie's written comments were placed into the record of the US Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation hearing on "Communications in a Disaster." Alaska Republican Ted Stevens chairs that Senate panel.

Kramer noted that for the first time ever, the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) has provided \$170,000 in grant supplements to the ARRL to support the efforts of Hurricane Katrina emergency communicators in the Gulf Coast. The grants to the ARRL's "Ham Aid" fund enable the League to reimburse some volunteers' out-of-pocket expenses on a per diem basis.

Kramer said he was honored to be chosen to provide the testimony on behalf of the ARRL. "I am proud of Amateur Radio's and our role in the Katrina relief effort," he added.

*(ed. see the ARRL website for a transcript of Harold's testimony)*

# Watch out in Connecticut..



New Connecticut "hands-free" law not expected to affect radio amateurs (Oct 4, 2005) -- A Connecticut state law restricting the use of handheld mobile electronic devices while driving went into effect October 1. The new statute, Public Act 05-220, in general prohibits drivers from using "a hand-held mobile telephone to engage in a call" or from "using a mobile electronic device" while the vehicle is in motion. ARRL General Counsel Chris Imlay, W3KD, says he believes the new law was intended to apply principally to cellular telephones, but he concedes it's not entirely clear that the new term "mobile electronic device" excludes Amateur Radio transceivers. Even so, Imlay said, "there is a good argument that they are, in fact, excluded." The law defines a "mobile electronic device" as any hand-held or other portable electronic equipment capable of providing "data communication," and cites text messaging as one example. Imlay says the new law could have done a better job of spelling out exactly what it applies to, however. "Most such statutes limit their applications to cellular phones and PCS, but this one seems to apply to video games, laptop computers, and possibly mobile radio transceivers," he said "It is inartfully drafted, as many are." He notes that a "mobile radio" simply is not a mobile telephone, but it could be construed to be a "mobile electronic device" under the law's definitions. The new law does exempt equipment intended to provide emergency assistance for the operator. "Arguably, Amateur Radio equipment is in that category, according to Section 97.1 of the Commission's rules," he said. Additionally, mobile Amateur Radio transceivers are capable of providing navigation assistance to the operator of the vehicle. Imlay concludes, however, that it would be better to have a specific exemption for Amateur Radio equipment. Radio amateurs cited under the new statute are asked to contact John Hennessee, N1KB, at ARRL Headquarters, 860-594-0236.

