

# Sparks from the Spa



A PUBLICATION OF SARATOGA COUNTY AMATEUR RADIO ASSOCIATION

*No Meeting in March, but —*

Attend the SCARA

## SWAPFEST

**SATURDAY, MARCH 14**  
**8 AM — 11AM**

**(VEC License Exams at 11:30)**

Coop. Extension “Solar” Building  
50 West High Street  
(Route 67 , 1 block West of Rt. 50)  
Ballston Spa, NY

←—————→

### Board of Directors Meeting February 9, 2009

The board meeting was called to order at 6:31 by President Darlene Lake, N2XQG. Present were BoD members Peter – W2BEW, Byron – K2BD, Ed – AB2XA, Al – KA1IEG, Dave – NR2J, and a number of club members.

- Al, KA1IEG, presented the treasurer’s report: Opening bal. \$10,205.08, less \$375 (fairground rental), less \$100 (donation to Wilton EMS); Closing bal. \$9830.08
- Byron, K2BD, has agreed to chair the club’s Field Day exercise again in June. Please plan on taking part in this fun, educational test/contest on June 27-28 at Wilton EMS.

- Peter gave the secretary’s report on membership: 118 names on our club roster, 60 paid-up members as of February; 8 complimentary members. We usually get many renewals at the SwapFest 3/14.
- Ed provided a rundown of coming public service events that need volunteer radio operators. See listing elsewhere in this newsletter.
- Darlene, N2XQG, reminded members that the Saratoga Fair will need net control operators during the evening hours, July 14-19. We have agreed to provide assistance in order to keep our rental rate low (\$375 instead of \$1200) for our Sept. hamfest.
- Date for upcoming 2009 HamFest – September 14.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:56 pm.

### General Meeting

Fifteen members attended the general meeting, which was convened at 7:32 pm. Paul Lent, director of Saratoga County Emergency Services, was our featured speaker for the evening, and Paul provided a very interesting discussion on county communication facilities and how SCARA can best interface with the county. Some pertinent points included:

- When Paul arrived on the job in February 2006, the county had spent \$5 million and 5 years trying to negotiate with the Adirondack Park Agency to site new radio towers throughout the county – without success. After 7 months on the job, he secured approval for all proposed sites.
- There is now a new 225-ft, self-supporting, solid



radio tower in Barkersville, and new towers will shortly be installed on Fraker Mountain (Edinburg), Horse Hill Road (Day) and Conklinville.

- New radio facilities being installed at tower sites are permanent, red-brick structures with similar equipment layouts and emergency power sources. Redundancy is a high priority.
- Plans are underway for the countywide system to transition to 800 MHz with automatic VHF overlay, where needed. The new digital system will be P.25 compatible for interoperability.
- In order for Paul and the county to activate ham radio volunteers, they must be trained and certified NIMS-compliant by FEMA (National Incident Management System). It is extremely important that as many members as possible take the online courses offered by FEMA that specifically cover communications protocol. Paul encouraged everyone to complete level 100, 200, 700 and 800 courses. Courses are on the Internet and are free. Find them at <http://training.fema.gov/IS/crslist.asp>. Start with the introductory courses at each level.
- Paul stressed that the need for outside volunteers arises when an emergency is very widespread and/or of long duration. If you volunteer for communications during an emergency, plan to be self-sufficient (food, water, clothing, etc.) for 72 hours.

Program for the April meeting (4/13) will be a discussion of *SWR Myths*, led by Sid – K2LJH.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:45.

*Submitted by Peter – W2BEW*

## Weekly Radio Net

Please join us on the air each Sunday evening at 7 PM for our weekly net. This regular gathering offers on-air practice in net operation in preparation for emergency situations. It also provides timely information to area amateurs, and serves as a forum for selling/swapping gear and discussing topics in a formally directed net environment.

The 147.00 and 147.24 repeaters are linked by the 448.225 MHz machine during this net, so feel free to check in on any of these repeaters. PL tone is 91.5 Hz.

We are looking for volunteer Net Control Stations for the Sunday evening net. It's easy. Just keep track of the check-ins and give everyone a chance to talk.

## Trading Post

*(Your equipment listings For Sale, Trade, or Wanted posted here. Email to [petermil@aol.com](mailto:petermil@aol.com).)*

## News from ARRL

*Compiled from ARRL Letter and [www.arrl.org](http://www.arrl.org)*

### JULIUS GENACHOWSKI NOMINATED AS NEXT FCC CHAIRMAN

On March 3, President Barack Obama nominated Julius Genachowski as FCC Chairman. Genachowski, 46, is a technology executive and a former classmate of Obama's from Harvard Law School. Upon Senate confirmation, Genachowski will replace Acting FCC Chairman Michael Copps. Genachowski has been widely praised by industry executives and consumer-activist groups -- two groups often at odds -- for his wide-ranging experience and intimate knowledge of technology issues.

Genachowski served as chief counsel to Reed Hundt, chairman of the FCC from 1993-1997. After leaving the FCC, Genachowski was a senior executive at IAC/InterActiveCorp, Barry Diller's e-commerce and media company. He went on to found an investment and advisory firm for digital media companies and co-founded the country's first commercial "green" bank.

Early in the Obama presidential campaign, Genachowski urged then-candidate Obama to capitalize on the organizing power of the Internet. The Washington Post credited him with "spearheading Obama's online campaign strategy, which used social networking and other tools to spread Obama's campaign message and raise record campaign contributions."

### FCC HAS DONE "LITERALLY NOTHING" TO COMPLY WITH COURT RULING

On February 25 -- 10 months to the day that the US Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit released its decision on the ARRL's Petition for Review of the FCC's Orders adopting rules governing broadband over power line (BPL) systems, ARRL General Counsel, Chris Imlay, W3KD, sent a letter to FCC Acting Chairman Michael Copps, requesting that the Commission "revisit the BPL rules without further delay, and to comply with the obligations placed on it by the Court."

In its April 2008 decision, the Court demanded two things from the FCC in its ruling: release the redacted studies that the Commission relied on for its BPL findings, and provide a "reasoned justification" for an extrapolation factor of 40 dB per decade, or adopt another factor and provide a reasoned explanation for it. According to Imlay, "to date, literally nothing has been done by the Commission to comply with these instructions."

## **News from ARRL, cont.**

Imlay said that the FCC's "inaction" since the remand has "served neither BPL deployment nor Amateur Radio, well." Imlay pointed out to Copps that without such rules protecting the Amateur Radio Service, Amateur Radio operators have no protection from the interference from BPL systems."

Imlay reminded Copps that on his inauguration day earlier this year, President Barack Obama placed a series of goals on the White House Web site. "Among these," Imlay said, "was the following: 'Restore Scientific Integrity to the White House: Restore the basic principle that government decisions should be based on the best-available, scientifically valid evidence and not on ideological predispositions.' The Commission has the opportunity to implement this goal in this Docket proceeding."

### **FCC SPECIAL COUNSEL LAURA SMITH VISITS ARRL**

Laura Smith visited ARRL Headquarters on March 5 and 6, her first official visit as Special Counsel. Smith was named to the position earlier this year, filling the vacancy created when Riley Hollingsworth, K4ZDH, retired in 2008; Hollingsworth served in that position for more than 10 years as the Commission's enforcement watchdog over the Amateur Radio Service.

Spending all Thursday afternoon with ARRL Lab staff, Smith discussed power line noise and how it can affect Amateur Radio. Staff also briefed Smith on some power line noise basics, including a demonstration of some professional grade locating equipment. Using a Model T spark coil as a noise source, they were able to show Smith how a utility can locate power line noise - in many cases, without too much difficulty.

Smith, a lawyer, is no stranger to the FCC or Amateur Radio. She began her legal career with the Commission, working in the Mass Media Bureau and Wireless Telecommunications Bureau. Smith also knew Hollingsworth through her father-in-law Richard M. Smith, former Chief of the Field Operations Bureau. "Riley worked for my father-in-law for years," Smith said. "My father-in-law was the Chief of the Field Operations Bureau at the FCC for 25 years. So enforcement is actually something that is a long-standing family tradition. Calling Hollingsworth "irreplaceable," Smith said, "I'm not going to be Riley. We're very different people. But we both have the same goal: To make the amateur community better."

Smith is not yet a licensed amateur. She said that she will get her license "someday," but that she did not want to get her license just because her job involves Amateur Radio. Smith said that her father-in-law used to administer the Morse code test to prospective licensees: "So he has challenged me that before I can become an amateur, I must learn Morse code and I must pass with him administering the Morse code. So I am going to begin learning Morse code this summer. He is going to

start teaching me, so once I have sufficient proficiency, then he will let me take the [Technician] test."

### **SOLAR UPDATE**

Tad Cook, K7RA, this week reports: There have been no new sunspots since the recent brief three-day appearance of quickly fading sunspot 1013 on February 24-26. It was another Solar Cycle 24 sunspot, but this is not too encouraging, considering how brief and weak it appeared. There are no predictions for new sunspots, but these events tend to occur suddenly. Sunspot numbers for February 26-March 4 were 12, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0 and 0 with a mean of 1.7. (*This is not good! – Editor.*)

## **Public Service**

### **4-H Walkathon—April 25 (Ed-AB2XA)**

4H Training Center—Middleline Rd B.S.

### **Lion's Duathlon—May 24 (Jim-K2LM)**

Skidmore Campus—S.S.

### **ADA Tour de Cure-June 7 (Lee-WB2NSC)**

S.S. High School, West Ave.

## **Upcoming Events**

### **ARRL International DX Contest (SSB): - March 7-8**

### **SwapFest - Saturday March 14, 8 —11 am.**

## **Reminder: Dues Are Due**

If you don't remember paying your dues lately, you probably didn't. All memberships were due for renewal effective January 1, 2009. If you're not sure, check with secretary Peter—W2BEW, at [petermil@aol.com](mailto:petermil@aol.com), or renew at the SwapFest.



## ***SPRING IS COMING!***

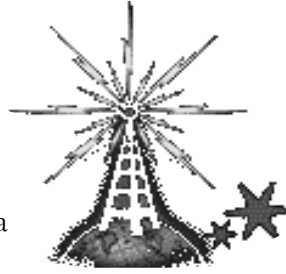
Get your antenna projects lined up and ready to go up in the air.



### WA2UMX ON THE INTERNET

The club has a website at:  
**http://www.wa2umx.net.**  
Here you will find the latest club news and events.

The club operates two 2-meter repeaters. The 147.24 repeater is located 15 miles west of Saratoga Springs at Lake Nancy. This repeater has a members-only phone patch. The 147.00 repeater is located 10 miles north of Saratoga Springs on Spruce Mountain, near Corinth, NY. This repeater offers an "emergency" phone patch. These two machines, in combination, offer excellent North to South and East to West communications far beyond Saratoga County. These repeaters are linked together at various times by the club's third repeater on 448.225 MHz.  
**PL Tone for all club repeaters is now 91.5 Hz.**



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