The ECAR Dispatch
A monthly communication

Erie County ARES/RACES—The AUXCOMM group

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Are you ready for our next exercise???

Welcome to the inaugural edition of the ECAR Dispatch! We will be using this medium to share stories and other useful information with members of the organization.

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Ed W2GUT — Editor

The ECAR machines:

- Buffalo VHF 146.865(+) 151.4
- Buffalo UHF 443.525(+) 151.4
- Orchard Park UHF 443.975 (+)141.3
- P25 system NAC 167
- Hamshack Hotline 6103148
- Hamshack Hotline Conference Bridge 1385

Where has RF APRS gone?

Is it your radio? Since packet began in 1978 too many people use it as a plug-N-play mode where you just connect your TNC to the radio and begin operating. Sure, it probably "works" on some strong signals, but could be suffering 10 to 40 dB of performance loss on weaker signals you might never notice (you don't see what you don't see)... Here is the **best explanation** I have seen by John Ackermann, N8UR. Some estimate that 90% of signals on the air are "bad" in that they were never adjusted for optimum settings of level, deviation, pre-emphasis, tone skew, de-emphasis, balance, and impedance, etc. Fix it (usually at the transmitter) if you want to be seen.

APRS Operations Tip: There are several different ways to optimize your APRS mobile operations depending on the immediate situation. One way to rapidly select between them without having to go through menu's is to simply program several radio channels with the different settings. The beauty of these channel suggestions is that you can always leave the speaker volume turned up on the APRS data band and can move between full audio monitoring, to **Voice Alert**, or to complete silence simply by changing channels. For the Voice Alert to always be functional and not miss a call, operators ***should never have their APRS band volume turned down***. Instead, they can silence the speaker in the presence of lots of voice alert stations by selecting the APRS mute channel.

From the RO's desk..

As we get into the New Year we find things moving quickly.
We had 8 members attend the AUXCOMM class in January and they are working on completing the task book which is required to be officially certified with the federal government. And we are waiting to hear about the next class to be held, ARE YOU READY to take the class??? We have updated equipment at not only the Chestnut Ridge site in Orchard Park we have a new site just north of the old which the county is not only hosting they have provided the equipment for us. Both locations are on full backup power and as everyone should know by now the Orchard Park site is dual mode Analog/P25. But more is to come, we will be expanding coverage of the repeaters and we will have more training to come for everyone to take advantage of.

73,
Joe Tedesco KC2DKP
Radio Officer

From the EC's desk..

Please reserve our usual 7PM second Monday of the month meeting night in April for SKYWARN training, presented by the National Weather Service Buffalo forecast office. Share this information with other hams you know that would be interested in participating.

The Ride for Roswell is only a few months away. We are always looking for volunteers to serve as sweep vehicles and to man the radio stations in Operations. I will be attending the police and fire safety meeting in April to keep current with RFR plans. The courses and layout on campus should be the same as last year, but I have learned the Ride will be moving back to Baird Point in 2026 to accommodate construction. I do have an idea how this will play out, but that planning is a long way off. One of our hallmarks is our flexibility in coping with changes. As I always inform participants, assignments are tentative. Be prepared to operate in a different role than what was initially planned.

Vince Harzewski N2JRS
EC / Asst. Radio Officer—Erie County ARES/RACES

From the Asst.RO's desk..

Training. It doesn't just happen on the 2nd Monday of each month. Training is a continuous strengthening of our minds and abilities, just beyond what we already know. It's vital to personal growth that once training is over, one practices what they learned until they've become proficient. Proficiency isn't basic knowledge, it's the mastery of a skill.

Greg Ramsdell - KD2MIC
Asst EC/ Asst Radio Officer - Erie County ARES/RACES

Little bit of history..

Ham radio might be considered a precursor to the social media of today. This form of communication dates back to the 1890s. It wasn't until 1912 when the Radio Act was passed, granting federal licensing to ham radio stations. Ham radio stations today are regulated by the United States Federal Communications Commission. In 1935, the ARRL Emergency Corps was formed with the goal of having an Amateur Radio Emergency Station in every community – a goal that remains just as urgent today as it did then! To wit, just look at today's emphasis on the neighborhood and community as "first responder" and on self-reliance in the post-disaster survival chain. More "served agencies" emerged as potential partners, including the Red Cross. In 1936, major flooding across a 14-state region served as the ARRL Emergency Corps' first major testing, serving well, and solidifying amateur radio's status as a critical disaster response communications asset and public service. Communications operating protocols and the appointment of Emergency Coordinators followed.

World War II meant a shutdown of amateur radio, but many hams joined the War Emergency Radio Service, which did provide some communications during the war period for natural disasters. After the war, ARRL reconstituted its disaster response communications programs and networks; the first Simulated Emergency Test was run in 1946. The Cold War followed, and the government formed the Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service (RACES) for civil defense (CD) purposes. It served as the forerunner of the modern emergency management model that we know so well today.

Emergency Operations Centers have operated under the Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service (RACES) concept for decades. Conceived during the early days of World War II, the War Emergency Radio Service (WERS) was a civil defense service in the United States from 1942 to 1945. During this time, the government had suspended all amateur radio activity throughout the country.

In 1952, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) officially established RACES as a part of its regulatory framework and set rules designed to provide a quicker and smoother transition in the event the President ever needed to silence the regular Amateur Radio Service when invoking the War Powers Act of 1941.

Over the years, the nature of emergencies and communication technologies evolved and some limitations of the RACES framework became apparent. While effective in many cases, the reliance solely on amateur radio operators proved insufficient to meet the demands of modern disaster response, which often required broader communication capabilities. The FCC stopped issuing new RACES licenses in 1978; however, some references to the service remain in the current Part 90 rules.

These limitations led to the transition from RACES to a more comprehensive approach, resulting in the development of Auxiliary Communications (AuxComm) by the Department of Homeland Security.

The shift reflects the growing recognition that effective emergency communication requires a multi-faceted approach that can tap into diverse communication resources. During emergencies, the ability to quickly disseminate critical information, coordinate response efforts, and provide situational awareness to both emergency responders and the public is essential. AuxComm empowers emergency communication teams to utilize various tools to achieve these goals, including High Frequency (HF), Very High Frequency (VHF), Ultra High Frequency (UHF), satellite communications (SATCOM), microwave, Wi-Fi, digital, video, photos, Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP), and other modes.

In essence, the history of RACES highlights the essential role that amateur radio operators have played in emergency communication throughout the years. While the specific framework of RACES has evolved into AUXCOMM, the commitment and dedication of these operators to public service remains a cornerstone of emergency preparedness and response efforts.

ODDS AND ENDS

Monthly Meeting Location
3359 Broadway
Cheektowaga N.Y. 14227

E-mail: ECARham@gmail.com

Have you been to ecarham.org yet??

Erie County ARES/RACES AUXCOMM is a volunteer communications group of FCC Licensed Amateur radio operators who are highly trained, motivated and are organized to provide communications in support to the County of Erie Emergency Services and other NGO's during times of disasters or when a need for enhanced communications and experience arises.

Join us on our net on Sunday's at 19:00 on the ECAR radio network OR come out to our meeting and say hi, we meet the second Monday of every month except for August at Erie County's Cheektowaga EOC. 73...

The Western New York Emergency Net is held Every Sunday at 19:00EST on 146.865/443.525Mhz; except for the 3rd Sunday, which is on the 443.975Mhz Chestnut Ridge repeater. Both with a 151.4Hz PL tone.

Occasionally on the 147.255Mhz W2SO repeater.

Do you have something for the Dispatch????

Do you have a story, news. project or review you would like to share with the group?

We are always looking for stories and information related to amateur radio and emergency communications to provide in the monthly newsletter that is put out to the membership to keep them informed.

Please try and keep it to under 500 words and please include any links to resources pictures or other information you want to include with the story.

Email your submissions to:

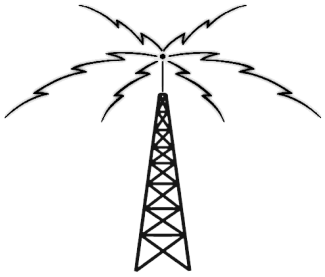
ECARham@gmail.com

ECAR email reflector:

Do you need an invite to the ECAR email reflector????

Contact Ed W2GUT at his email for an invite.

ed.w2gut@gmail.com



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