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January 2009

SARA General Meeting, Monday January 5th , 2009 at 7:00PM  
in "the Little Theater" Room D-104 at Niskayuna High School

## The New York State Electrical Power Grid and NYISO

This month's meeting will feature a presentation on the operation of the electric power grid by Ken Klapp of NYISO. New York Independent System Operator (NYISO) manages New York's electricity transmission grid – a 10,775-mile network of high-voltage lines that carry electricity throughout the state.

The NYISO also oversees wholesale electricity markets where more than \$50 billion has been transacted since 1999. NYISO serves all of the electric companies that operate within New York State which in turn is responsible to keep the power flowing to 19.2 million New Yorkers. The state's geographic location also means that the NYISO serves as the pivot point for the transfer of electricity to and from the Northeastern U.S. and Canada. The predecessor to NYISO was the New York Power Pool – a consortium of eight investor-owned utilities. Since Dec. 1, 1999, when NYISO was created it has grown into a 400-person organization and services a variety of critical energy needs for the State.

### About The SARA Meeting Location

The normal SARA meeting location for 2008-09 is in Niskayuna High School's "Little Theater" Room D-104 which is on a cross hallway between the two wings in the rear of the school. Due to major school construction at the front main entrance of the school there are changes once again this year in parking and the traffic pattern for access to the rear parking lot. Access to the school's rear parking lot can be gained by entering from Nott Street which crosses Balltown just south of the school at the light. Go past shopping mall where Friendly's is a few hundred yards on Nott Street and go into the Niskayuna High School rear entrance which is marked on the left. This entrance leads to the parking lot on the side/rear of the school. Also remember there is no smoking on school premises.

In the event of a major snow storm or another serious condition that cancels Niskayuna High School for evening classes and activities, the SARA meeting will normally be cancelled for that evening. Tune to the SARA K2AE 147.06 repeater for further information about the status of the meeting and if it is to be rescheduled from one of the SARA Officers: Jim - K2PK, Frank - WB2PUH, Hal - AK2E or George - W2CSN or SARA board members: Dan - KC2MER, Bill - KG2AC, Bob - WB2ARK or Bill - KC2NXC.

**RENEW YOUR SARA MEMBERSHIP** - 2009 is now here and the SARA membership year is half over for the 2008-2009 year. SARA membership should have renewed this past September! The meetings and activities of SARA are supported by your dues so please do your part. So please take the time to fill out the renewal coupon on the back address page of SARA News and mail it to the address shown or bring it to the SARA meeting and give it to our Treasurer George Williams W2CSN.

*Note: The following article is from the December 2008 issue of ARRL Club News and it pertains to the upcoming February 17, 2009 FCC mandated change for "all-over-the-air" TV Broadcasts to switch to a digital transmission format. This new digital format will not be receivable on many hundreds of millions of existing TV sets which currently directly receive TV broadcasts for free off the air. SARA members will remember that our October 2008 meeting featured WNYT's Chief Engineer Rich Klein who gave a presentation on the DTV transition and what was involved. The ARRL Club News article below notes that the FCC is looking for assistance from hams in easing what is likely a bumpy transition for those households which do not pay for satellite or cable TV service and are likely to lose all TV reception unless they have the needed equipment. - Dan Whelan N2UD – SARA News Editor*

## **FCC Calls on Amateur Radio Service** **– FCC Requests Ham's Technical Aid in Education on DTV.**

We have received a request by the FCC for members of the ARRL to provide technical educational assistance to their communities during January and February in accomplishing the digital TV conversion.

Clubs are being asked to develop and implement plans to provide information about the DTV conversion in their areas in ways they think best fits their community. Each community is a little different, so your plans may vary. Let your Section Manager know your group is willing to help out.

Hams should \*not\* make "house calls," sell any equipment or do actual installations -- the request is only to distribute technical information and their materials. As we all know, some folks just never get the message until too late. Materials for presentations, education and many other activities are available at

<http://www.dtv.gov/outreach.html> . Beginning early January, FCC staff will contact Section Managers and leaders of interested clubs and, where possible, arrange to meet for sharing even more information, A/V and printed materials and training aids with the clubs in this effort.

We know the time is short and problematic, (not our choice) but your aid in this now will be appreciated. In early January, Section Managers will be asked for the names and contact information of the volunteering groups. FCC staff will then make contact with them, learn their plans, and provide them with the media, brochures or other materials your group may need in this effort. Materials also can be downloaded from the web at <http://www.dtv.gov/outreach.html> . FCC regional staff may even come and visit with larger groups to aid in implementation of the group's plans.

"I really appreciate the willingness of the ARRL to actively participate in helping Americans with the transition to DTV and your helpful suggestions. The DTV transition will be an historic moment in the evolution of TV. Broadcast television stations can offer viewers improved picture and sound quality and new programming choices. All-digital broadcasting also will allow us to significantly improve public safety communications and will usher in a new era of advanced wireless services such as the widespread deployment of wireless broadband. As we discussed, our goal is to engage on a cooperative basis the amateur community to help with the DTV outreach and educate consumers on how to install a converter box and how to set it up. We also discussed the possibility of amateur groups providing technical advice by telephone to consumers who may encounter difficulty with the installation and setting up of their converter box. Any assistance that you can arrange through the ARRL Section Managers will greatly help in the efforts of the FCC to ensure a smooth transition to DTV on February 17, 2009." - George Dillon, FCC

The FCC will provide participating groups with news releases, audio clips (mp3 files) and announcement templates for them to use in local media in preparation of the activities. FCC will also provide clubs with educational video, PowerPoints and similar visual materials. As you plan, remember this is for technical educational help only. At no time should the hams enter someone else's home or be installers in this; nor should they broker or sell conversion boxes in any way.

Clubs can provide such things as a call in telephone number for technical help, make presentations at meetings, demos at malls, talks to other groups -- whatever works in their community. Local over-the-air broadcasters should be most interested in this activity, making it easier to get TV publicity about it. Other non-profit, volunteer groups are also being asked to help out, so this is also a chance to do some organizational networking. Some groups are already coming up with plans, such as: "I think a simple class at the community senior citizens centers would be great! Those things are everywhere all over the country. A large number of seniors could be taught to go out into the community. Many of these people are looking for something to do. Nothing wrong with hams acting as consultants and getting some good press from it."

Or how about contacting the local coordinators for Meals on Wheels and teaching their delivery volunteers what to look for in shut-ins still needing conversion units? Or the local Visiting Nurses? How about having an ARES drill in which your teams go looking for over-the-air TV antennas and note the addresses. Later you can hand out or send info to those locations. One group is planning to be in their community auditorium with some converters and talk about how to hook them up. Others are working with their weathermen/women, knowing that in a storm a lot of people look to TV for information.

Why not make a display with the FCC's materials -- but also be sure to have your local club info out too! You just might get some new prospects!

"Go on a talk-TV segment to demo creating a DIY antenna from coat hangers, to show what a 'paper tiger' the need for (an expensive) antenna is." And a similar comment, "Just letting everyone know that the DIGITAL READY antenna that the box stores sell for \$130 is the same as the old analog antenna that you can get for \$50, this lets people know that you are sincere in your presentation."

Each group is encouraged to think of ways to aid their community in this that work best in your own areas. If not with a store or call-in deal there, that's OK. These are just some starting suggestions. C'mon, Get creative!

There is not enough time left for articles in QST, the national magazine. But there is precedent of getting the word out quickly to clubs for a special need. After all, we're "communicators."

**SARA Board Meeting:** There was no SARA Board Meeting in December. Details of next board meeting will be available at next regular SARA meeting on January 5, 2009.

### **Reminder: ARRL Foundation Scholarship Program - DEADLINE FEBRUARY 1, 2009**

The ARRL Foundation administers scholarships for post secondary education students holding a valid FCC-granted Amateur Radio license. Scholarship awards range from \$500 to \$5000 or more and are available to high school seniors (or equivalent) or students currently enrolled in a college or university. The application period for the 2009 awards opens October 1, 2008 and ends February 1, 2009. For more information about available scholarships and for complete application instructions and forms, go to [www.arrl.org/arrlf/scholge](http://www.arrl.org/arrlf/scholge)

Among these is the SARA Henry Broughton K2AE Memorial Scholarship which is \$1000 and available to college bound hams within 70 miles of Schenectady. This past year the 2008 recipient was Daniel Bradke – W2AU of Niskayuna. Time is short to apply for the 2009 ARRL scholarships so use the special application [instructions and forms](#) which are only available on the ARRL website at <http://www.arrl.org/programs/scholarship>



### **UPCOMING EVENTS**

Dates	Contest / Hamfest / Event	Location / Website
1 Jan 2009	ARRL Straight Key Night	<a href="#">Rules</a>
3-4 Jan 2009	ARRL RTTY Round Up	<a href="#">Rules</a>
<b>5 Jan 2009</b>	<b>SARA Meeting – 7 PM (First meeting of 2009)</b>	<b>Rm.D-104 Niskayuna High School</b>
17-18 Jan 2009	ARRL January VHF Sweepstakes (50 Mhz and UP) FM limited to direct only (no repeater or remote base use). No use of 2M 146.52 calling frequency, but 146.55, 146.58 OK	<a href="#">Rules</a> - Begins Sat. 2PM EST ends Sun. 11PM EST. Exchange is four digit Grid Square (Typically "FN-32" Schenectady Area)
21-22 Feb 2009	ARRL International DX Contest (CW)	<a href="#">Rules</a>
7-8 Mar 2009	ARRL International DX Contest (Phone)	<a href="#">Rules</a>

Be sure to check out the ARRL Hamfest calendar for more detailed informations. Go to <http://www.arrl.org/hamfests.html>

**Silent Keys:** Each year there are a number of silent keys who are former SARA club members. Sometimes we are made aware of them in a timely way and other times sadly, we only find out about their passing after a long time because many have often moved out of the area. As this New Year starts we should all take time to remember the passing of ALL our friends through the years.

Recently it was called to our attention that George Floyd who had a nick name of "Lighthouse Larry" but who's former ham call is not known. The Gazette indicated he died Nov. 22 in Lynchburg VA at 91. He was formerly with GE here during WW2 here but left the area in the late 1940s for GE in Mobile in VA. He is said to have been involved with writing of GE Ham Newsletters which were popular and other ham magazines.

## SARA's Board Of Directors 2008-2009

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## VE Registration (518) 370-1350



SARA Dues: Regular Member \$20 \_\_\_\_\_ New Member Initiation \$5 \_\_\_\_\_ Repeater Fund \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
Family Member \$5 \_\_\_\_\_ Student Member \$5 \_\_\_\_\_ SARA News US postal delivery Add \$5 \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Callsign \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ (SARA News is sent via Email)

Street \_\_\_\_\_ I belong to ARRL \_\_\_ ARES \_\_\_ RACES \_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

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