

# Sidebands

The Newsletter of the **EAST GREENBUSH AMATEUR RADIO ASSOCIATION**



September 2016

President - Tom Scorsone, KC2FCP  
Secretary - Russ Greenman, WB2LXC

Vice-President - Ridge Macdonald, KB2HWL  
Treasurer & Newsletter Editor - Bryan Jackson, W2RBJ

## Amateur of the Year! EGARA's Lee Hatfield, K2HAT

Lee Hatfield, K2HAT, has been named the ARRL's Hudson Division 2016 *Amateur of the Year* for his contributions to ham radio in the region. The award was announced by Division Director Mike Lisenco, N2YBB, following nominations from throughout the area. Lee is an active member of both the East Greenbush Amateur Radio Association, and the Troy Amateur Radio Association.

"It's great that Lee's interest and support of amateur radio has been recognized by his fellow hams with this award," said EGARA President Tom Scoresone. "I'm sure I speak for all of our members in extending our congratulations to him."

The Hudson Division also recognized three other amateurs in the region with its Grand Ol' Ham award. They included Andy Bodony K2LE, Gordon Shacklett KB2SSZ and Joe Dreifuss W2KQ.



Lee Hatfield, K2HAT, works the world from the shack in his Rensselaer home

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## Teamwork Lead to Big FCC Fine for Unlicensed Operations

By Mike Lisenco, N2YBB - Director, ARRL Hudson Division

By now many of you have read the ARRL news regarding the issuance by the FCC of a Notice of Apparent Liability to Daniel Delise of Astoria, N.Y. The fine, in the amount of \$23,000, was for unlicensed operation on Amateur frequencies as well as illegal broadcasting on NYPD frequencies. However, there are some things I'd like to bring out and people that should be recognized for their assistance.

First, it was the direct assistance of Congressman Peter King (R NY-2) who responded to my request for help. By giving us his support, he got the issue that had been plaguing us for a decade to the attention of FCC Chairman Wheeler. His letter got us off the back burner and up to the front of the line.

Second, it was the direct involvement of David C. Dombrowski, Regional Director of the FCC Region One Enforcement Bureau and his willingness to work with us and to use information we provided as potential leads as he developed his own investigation.

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**Reminder! Next EGARA Monthly Meeting  
is September 14th**

# EGARA's Annual Hudson Cruise

Photos by Steve VanSickle, WB2HPR  
and Bryan Jackson, W2RBJ



Some 15 EGARA members turned out Saturday, August 20th for a three hour tour of the Upper Hudson aboard the Spirit of Albany skippered by our very own Dave Williams, N2VLQ. A perfect day and a smooth trip! Thanks, Dave!

## FCC Cracks Down on Unlicensed Operations

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Third, it was the development of a system of grass-roots reporting that depicted the current pattern of intentional interference with legitimate Amateur communications on local repeaters. The collection of data through the facilities of the Hudson Division, which was forwarded to the authorities, was coordinated by Richie Cetron K2KNB in his joint roles of both an Official Observer as well as Assistant Director.

Finally, we received assistance from FCC Special Counsel Laura Smith who has been a great help in keeping us informed and in the loop.

I want to thank all of you who helped me in this effort. When we work together as a group, it's amazing what we can accomplish. (Of course, a little luck doesn't hurt either.) The text of the FCC NAL can be found here:

[http://transition.fcc.gov/Daily\\_Releases/Daily\\_Business/2016/db0831/DA-16-993A1.pdf](http://transition.fcc.gov/Daily_Releases/Daily_Business/2016/db0831/DA-16-993A1.pdf)

The ARRL news article can be found here: <http://www.arrl.org/news/fcc-proposes-substantial-fine-for-unlicensed-amateur-operation-false-police-call>

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## Capacitor Price-Fixing Case Results in Guilty Pleas

In an ongoing U.S. Justice Department investigation, three more electronics companies have agreed to plead guilty in an international price-fixing conspiracy affecting the price of electrolytic capacitors worldwide. The agreement by Rubycon Corporation, Elna Co. Ltd. and Holy Stone Holdings Co., Ltd., brings to five the total of companies pleading guilty in the probe. Guilty pleas were previously entered by NEC TOKIN Corp. and Hitachi Chemical Co. Ltd.

Deputy Assistant Attorney General Brent Snyder, of the Justice Department's Antitrust Division, said millions of American consumers were impacted by the price-fixing. In addition to their importance in amateur radio, the companies' capacitors are also found in such consumer electronics as auto airbags and engines, computers, televisions, office equipment and home appliances.

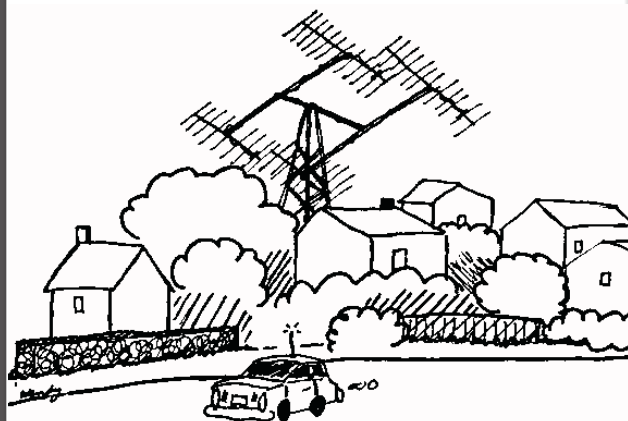
Each of the three companies has agreed to pay a criminal fine and cooperate with the ongoing probe. The two other companies have already been sentenced to pay. NEC TOKIN was fined \$13.8 million and Hitachi Chemical was fined \$3.8 million.

## Solder Seminar Set for November EGARA Meeting



Soldering may seem like a pretty simple thing to do, but there's a right way and a wrong way. And a mistake can make toast out of an expensive piece of equipment. Come to the November meeting of the EGARAs for some helpful tips on how to make your solder joints perfect every time!

## Ham It Up



"OK Fred, I'm on Maple Street... which house is yours?"

## Amateur of the Year K2HAT

Lee's love of radio began many years ago when his two uncles showed him their CB radios. "I always thought it was neat to be able to talk through the radio waves, *wireless*," he said. Not long after, his father helped him get his own CB set -- and the FCC license needed to operate it. That was in 1969.

By the early 1970s, Lee had the chance to meet some local hams and he soon decided that getting his amateur license was the next step to pursue. He's been an active ham ever since, winning a number of awards and recognitions, including being a member of ARRL's DX Century Club.

Today, Lee runs an Elecraft K3, with the factory MH2 Hand mic. the P3 panadaptor, and in early 2014, he added a KPA500 Amplifier. In 2014 alone, he logged over 15,000 contacts.

Lee and the others recognized by the Hudson Division this year will be honored during an awards luncheon, sponsored by the Orange County Amateur Radio Club (OCARC). The event will be held on Saturday, November 5, 2016 from noon to 4:00 pm at the Ramada Cafe International in Newburgh, N.Y.

Tickets are \$37.00 per person or a group table of ten seats can be purchased for \$333.00. For more information on the awards luncheon, visit the OCARC website at: [http://www.ocarc-ny.org/HV\\_awards.shtml](http://www.ocarc-ny.org/HV_awards.shtml). Tickets can also be ordered by mailat: [http:// hudson.arrrl.org/2016-ticket-order-form/](http://hudson.arrrl.org/2016-ticket-order-form/)

All proceeds this year will be donated to the ARRL Legislative Issues Advocacy Fund. Donations to this fund are used specifically to support he efforts to promote, inform, and advocate to Congress on behalf of Amateur Radio.

## Two Area Hamfests Set for Weekend of September 10-11

The 31st Annual Saratoga County (NY) Hamfest will be held on Sunday, September 11 at the County Fairgrounds in Ballston Spa, NY. The event has typically drawn about 400 enthusiastic hams from east, north and central New York, as well as western Massachusetts and Vermont.

The Boxboro, Massachusettes hamfest will also be held that weekend for the first time. Saturday is Boxboro's big day, with the Saratoga fest on Sunday. Anyone attending the Boxboro event can bring their ticket stub to the Saratoga hamfest and get their admission price reduced to just \$3.

This year the Saratoga hamfest will feature more hourly raffles, a foxhunt on the grounds, plus hourly presentations on what's hot in ham radio, including Arduino and Raspberry Pi projects, remote operation of your ham station, intro to ARES and RACES, the Olympics of Antenna Launcher devices, and more.

For the first time the Saratoga event is also offering "Bucket Prizes" featuring several pieces of high-end ham gear. Special bucket prize tickets will be sold to be dropped into the bucket that's associated with the prizes.

The Saratoga hamfest will also offer a VE session.

## Join the Nightly Ragchew

EGARA members are invited to join the club's 6 meter ragchew every weeknight at 6 pm on 50.125 Mhz.

It's a great way to catch up on club news and events, as well as keeping in touch with other club members. Tune in!

## 5...4...3...2...1: Readability Reports

By Dan Romanchik, KB6NU

I'm big on Twitter. It connects me to a lot of interesting amateur radio operators, and I find a lot of food for thought there. Recently, I saw the following Tweet:

“Charlie – M0PZT @M0PZT Blog updated: RST and Speed Matters <http://www.m0pzt.com/blog/rst-and-speed-matters/#hamradio>”

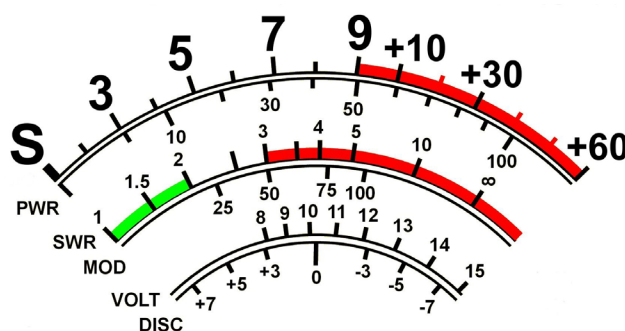
Being a CW geek, of course I was interested. Charlie's point is that if you get a bad report, you probably should send more slowly. I certainly have no argument with that. What I do take a little bit of an issue with is that Charlie says, “A Readability 4 report should really make it known that information needs to be brief, but repeated – Certainly no ANT/RIG/WX waffle!”

According to most sources, Readability 4 means, “Readable with practically no difficulty.” When I receive an R4 report, I might slow down a little, but it doesn't mean to me that I have to cut the contact short or repeat information over and over. I replied on Twitter that if the operator at the receiving station is having so much trouble copying, then the report should probably be 319 or even 219.

Of course, RST reports are open to interpretation. With that in mind, I thought I'd explain a little more fully how I decide what Readability report to give:

R5: Perfectly readable. To me, this means that copying a signal is no work at all, and that it sounds like it's coming out of a code practice oscillator. I can put my feet up on the desk or putter around the shack while I'm ragchewing with the other operator.

R4: Readable with practically no difficulty. “Practically no difficulty” is the key phrase here. There may be some QRN or QSB on this signal, and I have to pay some



attention while copying. An R4 is still solid copy, though, and ragchewing is definitely possible.

R3: Readable with considerable difficulty. A signal that rates an R3 needs my full attention. I have to work at copying the signal, and even then, might miss

characters here and there. Even though I don't copy every single character, I'm able to fill in the gaps. An R3 signal might not be good enough for a ragchew, and repeating information is probably a good idea.

R2: Barely readable, occasional words distinguishable. A signal that rates an R2 is usually so weak that it's below the noise level or drops below the noise level occasionally. At this level, the contact will definitely be brief and any important information, such as the callsign needs to be repeated.

R1: Unreadable. Generally, I would never give out this report, as I would never attempt making contact if a signal was truly unreadable.

Although my explanations above reflect the fact that I'm primarily a CW operator, I think they also apply to phone or even digital contacts. For example, an R5 for a phone contact would mean that the signal sounds like it could be coming from just down the street or coming through the local repeater.

What do you think? How do you decide what Readability report to give?

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Dan, KB6NU, is the author of the "No Nonsense" amateur radio license study guides, and blogs about amateur radio at KB6NU.Com. You can contact him by e-mailing [cwgeek@kb6nu.com](mailto:cwgeek@kb6nu.com). If you want an honest Readability report, look for him most evenings on 40m CW.

## On the Beam News & Notes

### FCC to Study Radio Spectrum Noise

The FCC Technological Advisory Council (TAC) will soon begin an investigation into changes and trends to the radio spectrum to determine if there is an increasing noise problem. ARRL told the Commission that such a study is long overdue. It added that while a noise floor problem exists, "The magnitude of this problem and the extent of it in the 21st century is virtually unknown."

The ARRL said that its members can be of use in gathering data for the TAC noise study, but advised that any urgency in initiating the study "be tempered by the prerequisite need to develop a standardized and valid methodology for conducting the study," in order to "obtain quantitative data regarding the noise floor in various environments and trends over time."

ARRL said the focus of the TAC noise "study should be an accurate determination of what noise levels exist in as wide a range of indoor and outdoor environments as possible. It should, to the extent possible, determine what types of noise are being found: Broadband, non-specific noise; broad noise spectral peaks; broadband digital noise; and noise occurring on discrete frequencies."

"We also hope that these comments will serve as a stimulus for the Commission to re-evaluate its 'hands-off' policy with respect to the most recalcitrant and unhelpful operators of incidental and unintentional radiators which are causing long-term interference problems, such as electric utilities," ARRL concluded. "The unwillingness of the Commission to issue meaningful sanctions has led to the virtual absence of any incentive to comply with the Commission's Part 15 non-interference obligations."

"The growing number of interference complaints indicates that any increase in noise levels will result in harmful interference, so these rules may need to require a decrease in the permitted limits for emission to balance the aggregate noise potential of a growing number of noise emitting devices."

### AES Signs Off After 59 Years in the Ham Equipment Business



Amateur Electronic Supply (AES) closed its doors at the end of July after 59 years in business. AES had been a premier player among Amateur Radio equipment retailers for decades, as well as a major presence at Dayton Hamvention and other events.

"It's with great sadness that I have to tell you that Amateur Electronic Supply (AES) will cease operations at the end of this month," AES National Sales Manager Tom Pachner, W9TJP, said in an e-mail. The flagship AES store in Milwaukee was quickly

purchased by Ham Radio Outlet (HRO) and reopened after a makeover. However, AES outlets in Cleveland, Las Vegas, and Orlando were shuttered.

Wisconsin native Terry Serman, W9DIA, founded AES in 1957 when he was just 18, after working in his father's TV and electronics parts store. In 1998, ownership of AES shifted to Amateur Electronic Supply LLC, headed by Phil Majerus, a Wisconsin businessman. Serman died the following year at the age of 60, after a period of ill health. For many years, the public face of AES was its Executive Vice President Ray Grenier, K9KHW, who oversaw marketing and advertising for the retailer from 1964 until his retirement in 2013. Grenier nearly singlehandedly produced the famous AES catalog.

Many radio amateurs reacted to the news on various online forums, expressing surprise, sadness, and dismay, and saying they would miss AES. A few reminisced about having bought their first radios from AES.

# CALENDAR

September 9, 10, 11 - *ARRL New England Convention and Boxboro Hamfest*, Holiday Inn Boxboro Woods Boxborough, Massachusetts

September 11, 2016 - *Hamfest 2016* - Saratoga County Amateur Radio Assn., Saratoga County Fairgrounds, Ballston Spa. Opens 7 am. Admission \$10.

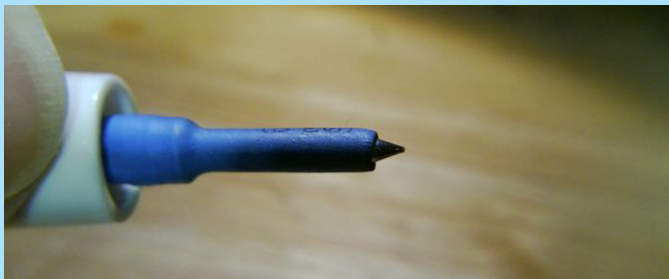
September 14, 2016 - *EGARA Membership Meeting* East Greenbush Masonic Temple, 7 pm

October 8, 2016 - *VE Exam Session* - Location: East Greenbush Community Library - Time: 10:15 AM (Walk-ins allowed) - Sponsor Egara

## Pro Tip: Cover That Meter Probe!

Here's a simple tip for avoiding costly mistakes when measuring values on a powered-on board: cover up your meter probes!

Meter probes are oh so shiny and conductive but they also like to slip and contact other parts you don't want touched. This sort of unwanted contact often leads to nasty sparks and subsequent release of the "magic smoke" from your components. Instead, use a piece of shrink tubing to cover all but the tip of the probe, as shown here.



It may seem like a "duh" -- but wait until it happens to you! Things like vintage power output transistors and old chips are expensive to replace. Shorting an output transistor induces big current flows through other parts resulting in collateral damage. One slip can result in multiple burnt parts. A tip to the wise!



## For Sale

*Vibroplex Original semi automatic "bug" key.* Like-new, Excellent condition, adjusted and tested – ready for your CW operating position. \$170 – Steve WB2HPR 518-326-0902

*Icom 7100 All-mode transceiver* HF / VHF / UHF / S-Star and touch screen - HF 100 watts / 6 meter VHF 50 watts / UHF- 35 watts. Original box, manual, mike, dc power cable, cd and usb cable. \$ 950.00

*Kenwood TS 480 HX* features all-mode operation from HF - 50 mhz amateur radio band. Separate remote control panel for mobile operation; DSP processing w/ adj filter; 200 watts power on ssb, cw, fsk & fm, 50 watts output on AM; 50 Mhz band 100 watts and 25 watts on AM. \$ 875.00

For above two items, contact Tom Scorsone by e-mail at: [kc2fcp@nycap.rr.com](mailto:kc2fcp@nycap.rr.com).

## Wanted to Buy

*Any old broadcast radios* for possible restoration, any brand, style, preferably tubes models. Contact: Steve WB2HPR at 326-0902.

**Looking to Buy, Sell or Swap?**  
**Send your info to [W2RBJ@outlook.com](mailto:W2RBJ@outlook.com)**

## The East Greenbush Amateur Radio Association

Organized in 1998, by Bert Bruins, N2FPJ, SK and Chris Linck, N2NEH, the East Greenbush Amateur Radio Association, an ARRL affiliate, is committed to providing emergency services, educational programs, and operating resources to the amateur radio operators and residents of the Capital Region of New York State. The club station is W2EGB. The club also has several VHF and UHF repeaters open to club members and the public.