

SQUAW ISLAND AMATEUR RADIO CLUB HISTORY
BY HARRIET BLODGETT K2KLP

On October 7, 1953 a group of "HAMS" got together to form the club now known as the "SQUAW ISLAND AMATEUR RADIO CLUB". This club has in more recent years been more commonly known as the "SIARC" group. The first President was Merle Hyldahl W2VUR, Vice President was Al Bowman W2ZUX and the Secretary was Mert Standish W2HYP. The first meeting was held at the home of Carl Bates K2EGB, however, the membership grew and the second meeting was held in the Y.M.C.A. William Glenn, Chairman of the Ontario County Civil Defense Communications was one of the early speakers and SIARC has been closely related to Ontario County CD since.

Radio equipment was purchased by Ontario County for participation in County and District drills. Gonset Communicators were the first pieces of equipment obtained. This gear was used and maintained by club members. The Early County Board of Supervisors and the Civil Defence Directors were very cooperative in purchasing whatever materials were needed to maintain the equipment. A permanent meeting place was a real problem due to other group meetings. Some of the places SIARC has held their meetings are "The Powers Room" at the Hotel Canandaigua, "Firemens Room" at the Victor Fire Dept., "Civil Defense Office" at the Court House and Sly St. in Canandaigua, "Town Hall" in Hopewell Center, Ontario County "Farm and Home Center", The "Salvation Army" in Canandaigua, as well as many private homes. Currently the club meets at Ontario County Office Bldg. on County Road 46. An Instructograph was purchased by the club to help new HAMS in learning the code. Keeping track of the machine was quite a job. Someone would borrow it and then loan it to someone else. George Popplewell and Hank Blodgett tell about trips they took trying to track it down in the 70's when renewed interest in amateur radio indicated a need for it. Their efforts between 1973 and 1975 were labor lost as the machine was never found.

At the Club's third meeting, Secretary Mert Standish was elected to assume a Treasurer's responsibilities as there was a need to set up some controls on dues, door prizes, meeting place fees, etc. A Constitution and By-Laws had been developed, revised, and were adopted at the 1954 February meeting. By April of that year technical and membership committees were formed and an activities manager elected. A two meter net was started Sunday mornings at 8 A.M., however, this was given up on October 11, 1955. Cal Brown, Ontario County Civil Defense Director advised the Club of a 24 hour State wide communications test and wanted the CD group to participate. Hank Blodgett, newly appointed Ontario County Radio Office gave a talk to the group on what was expected and hoped for during the test. The new Gonsets were used. ARRL affiliation was discussed and investigated in December 1953 but not approved until April 12, 1963. Yoe Seiler W2EB gave many interesting talks and demonstrations during the first year of the Club's existence.

The Club's first family picnic was held on September 14, 1954. Others were held at the Blodgetts' and the Farm and Home Center. A hot dog roast became

very popular. Now it is the famous Chicken Bar-B-Q which was started by Chuck VanVoorhis K2ZFV. Many fine friendships have developed at these yearly events. Field Day planning started in March 1955. The first site for Field Day was at Baker Hill in the town of Victor. Most of the FD sites had to be prepared for use (mainly mowing.) A change in membership requirements was approved in January 1955. After the initial organization, the first election of officers was held in September 1955. In July 1955 the first training course was held at Mickey Willis' home in Canandaigua. Carl Bates was the Ontario County CD Communications Manager and with Henry Blodgett, the then temporarily appointed Radio Officer, got the races program reorganized. By this time, Cam Hicks was the new Civil Defense Director. He gave a talk on new CD plans and agreed that more Gonsets were needed in order to properly carry out the tests and keep the amateurs active. Additional Gonset units were received in December 1955. By March 1956, the Club dues was reduced because of an adequate bank balance. In February 1956 the Club made a request for Call Letter Auto Registration Plates. However a letter from Mr. Quigley indicated that it was an impossibility at that time. During September 1956 the Club had a display at the Victor Central School Fair, with equipment and QSL cards from local HAMS for fair goers to see. A CW net was started on Sundays at 9 A.M. More people were becoming interested in amateur radio and classes were continued to help them. In October 1956 Carl Bates was instrumental in starting a Club Bulletin. An appropriate name was chosen "The Smoke Signal".

In February 1957 a DX-35 kit was purchased and assembled for Club use. In May of that year Ernie Brown K2BWK purchased a Heath VFO to go with the DX-35. In December the units were raffled off. A Lady's Night was held in January 1958. A most unique skit was put on by Ester Green, Ruth Brown, Lois Corey and Harriet Blodgett. It was entitled "A Helping Hand in HAM Radio". Anyone remember the 807's? By 1960 the membership had grown considerably. Some had left but others came to take their place. The Lady's Night Spaghetti Dinners put on by Henry Vecchi were memorable. It finally got to be quite a tradition to roll meatballs the Sunday before the dinner-300 was the average number. When Henry's store burned Lady's Night was changed to going to a restaurant and really treating the ladies. They did not have to do the dishes there. On November 16, 1959 Mert Standish, one of the Club's founding members and past President, passed away. A handbook was purchased with money donated by Russ Miller VE3AMA of Canada in memory of Mert. Russ and Mert were close friends through amateur radio. In February 1963 the Club made a \$25.00 contribution to the ARRL building fund. The Seneca Drums Radio Club of Geneva joined our group for an auction and invited our Club to their Clambake in September 1963. Many varied subjects were spoken on and demonstrations put on by representatives from Radio Clubs and radio related companies as well as from general interest groups. A QST subscription was donated to the Canandaigua Library in memory of Mert Standish in January 1966.

Successful raffles were held to create interest in Club attendance. However in the early 70's attendance began to fall off and efforts were made to keep the club going. An application for a Repeater License was submitted to the

FCC in December 1973. Upon receiving the License a repeater was put on the air either late July or early August of 1974. October 1974 found the repeater off the air for a short period of time. In April 1975 a solid state repeater amplifier was installed to make a better operating machine. The Civil Defense organization also hit a low ebb due to general apathy nationally as well as locally. The Club dues remained the same until new By-Laws were drafted and adopted in May 1981. Membership picked up again in 1977 to 1978 with the addition of new HAMS who took classes and passed their FCC tests with members from Ontario, Yates, Wayne, and Monroe Counties. The smoke signal having been dropped in the mid 70's was brought back to life in 1979 by Karyn and Chuck Demitry and in 1980/81 Jenny and Tom Richmond took over and Mary Jane and Bill Ehlers undertook the task for a two year period.

In as much as the group was large enough again and equipment sophisticated enough to provide good uninterrupted communications several public service projects were undertaken. The first endeavor was to assist the Canandaigua Police with what has become known as the "Spook Patrol" on three consecutive Halloweens. Then with traffic observation at boat races at Canandaigua Lake, assisted Rara at the Mendon Pony Rally, Wild Water Races at Shortsville and the Jean Mitchell Memorial Foot Races at Canandaigua. Many people have added their time, effort and support in the years since 1953 to make SIARC a great group. Over the years one of the most enjoyed parts of the Club meetings has been the discussions following the programs over a cup of coffee and doughnuts usually but some times a cake or cookies were there for a change. The coffee pot detail has been a job that very few volunteer for, but several have done an outstanding job at keeping the supplies well stocked and providing the goodies every month. One of the big changes has been the Call Sign Prefixes held by members as they have upgraded their licenses. If you have an original plain "W" or "K" you are "OLD". Another thing is the equipment there have sure been some changes there too in the 30 years that SIARC has been in existence. The old Civil Defense name has been changed to "Office of Disaster Preparedness". The Ontario County Office is headed by Donald Barnes, Director.

It has been a pleasure to submit this history from 1953 to 1983 of which I have been a part.

Harriet Blodgett, Historian 81/83

Welcome to the SIARC Homepage

SIARC stands for Squaw Island Amateur Radio Club

Here is some Past History on the Club's activities..

First meeting 10/02/53

SIARC name selected Nov. 1953

First Field Day--Baker Hill, town of Victor 1955

First Smoke Signal 10/56

Affiliation with ARRL Since 1963

First Wild Water Derby 1984

First licensed repeater 1974 , Presently on 146.820 / 146.220

Incorporated October 14, 1986

Founding Members:

Carl Bates-----KN2EGB

Alton Bowman---W2ZUX**

Merle Hyldahl---W2VUR

Lou Geis -----K2DYA

Ralph Hart-----K2DYC

Bill Shaw-----W2HYN

Mert Standish---W2HYP

****Still a member of SIARC**

Present Officers: President---Jim McClure N2YZT

Vice Pres.--Rich Place WB2JLR

Secretary---Ruth Schmidt N2VDK

Treasurer---Ernie Brown K2BWK

**Meetings are held at the Ontario County EMS Training Center, County Road 48,
Canandaigua, NY**

On the Second Tuesday of each Month except July & August.

Meetings Start at 7:30 p.m.

For More info , contact :

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THIS WAS GIVEN TO ME BY JUNE GEIS WHO WAS LOU GEIS'S WIFE. HE WORKED
AT THE POLICE STATION AT THE TIME AND SINCE HAS PASSED AWAY.
ENJOY

BILL SHAW - W2HYN - 22 00 0000 0000 0000 0000 0000 0000 0000 0000