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From Your President

Happy New Year to all! I hope everyone and their families had some great holidays. I'm glad to say our club had a great 2019 and things are looking good going forward into the New Year of 2020.

We have made some new improvements to our club station in the last couple of months. I am very happy to report that we have been getting great help from some of our active members and things are starting to pay off with improvements to our station and more interaction and fun among our members.

This is a good sign that our club is moving forward and not becoming stagnant. The members who are not so active may not realize some of the new improvements being implemented for the benefit of our club, so later on throughout these newsletters I will take time to bring everyone up to speed with several updates of club projects and accomplishments. Please take the time to read some of the articles to get updated and best wishes for you, your families and STARS in 2020.

Your President:

Ken Pokigo



**In 2020, Let Make STARS
Club Great Again!**

Clubhouse Internet

By Ken Pokigo KC2AYK

The internet connection has been much improved. Joe (aka Gizmo) Barrile, KD2LHF, has been a great help with our IT and network services. Thanks Gizmo! He has been working on the network for quite a while now and now things are finally firming up. We have a new wireless link from the Town Rec building to our clubhouse and it is working much better than before. We have replaced our older hacked wireless devices between buildings with "bullets". For those of you who are not computer geeks, these are devices that are integrated wireless radio devices that mount near an antenna that



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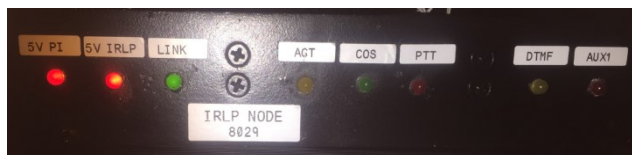
allow to create powerful and robust outdoor point to point wireless links. The bullets provide a much more power RF signal than before. This new link is much more solid and will be less problematic for us.

Joe also worked on upgrading our main router at our station. The previous router was giving us unexpected trouble from time to time and dropping our internet connection. This would take our IRLP node offline as well, so it was a terrible problem. We now have a new, more modern router which has lots of capabilities and is much easier for us to use. So "hats off" to Joe for the great work on the networking systems!

IRLP node 8029

By Ken Pokigo KC2AYK

Well IRLP node 8029 is back up and running. I had pulled it out from the station when we were experiencing all kinds of problems and took it home for an overhaul. I went through some of the software and firmware to make sure things were updated correctly. I also had some hardware troubleshooting to do but now it is again functioning well. I have the IRLP node working offsite from the Nike base right now so that I have close access and can continue to refine its operation while we do other things at the club station. This is a much better set up for now and was originally driven by the lack of a stable internet connection at the club station location. At a future point in time, we will bring the hardware back and install it. None of this really matters since it is all transparent to the user. It all still functions the same way. I encourage members to start using it and enjoy!



IRLP

Internet Radio Linking Project

Program Chair Position Open

If you are interested in filling the position of Program Chair, please contact John KA2RFT for more details.

New York QSO Party

By Gerry Maira KA2MGE

On Oct. 19, 2019, the club participated in the New York QSP Party (NYQP) from the club station. The club entered in the multi operator, multi transmitter (2 stations), SSB, all band, non-assisted, low power category. An outstanding effort was made and the club achieved an all-time high claimed score of 93,830 points from 857 QSO's. Having 2 active elements for 40 meters on an HF beam at 80' made operation on that band very busy and produced a lot of points. Participants included AA2CC, KC2VWG, K2PMC, KA2RFT (event chairman), KB2KOL and KA2MGE. The organizers of the NYQP are presently reviewing the logs submitted and the results will be published soon.



Fredonia Mini-Maker Faire

By Gerry Maira KA2MGE

The club participated in another event on Oct. 19, 2019. Once again, Joe Claus KB2JDB headed up the club's exhibit at the Fredonia Mini-Maker Faire. From all reports, the club's kit-building activity attracted a lot of interest and participation from the public.

**Fredonia Mini
Maker Faire®**

Corrections

If ewe sea sum thing wee did knot get rite, lettuce no:

wb2elw@twc.com

SDR at the Clubhouse

By Ken Pokigo KC2AYK

I have been working in the background with Mike Fetto, KB2FX, who has been helping with our experimentation with SDR (software defined radio). As we were playing along, Mike came up with an idea and offered to take the lead to implement a SDR at the club station that all members could benefit from. He and I have been discussing this and testing for a couple months already now. We were working with Joe to see if we could implement this with a good stable internet connection. Now since the internet is functioning much better with our new router we have had some great success. Mike has spent a lot of time at his home station working with his SDR and did a lot of investigative work to determine what would be a good way for us to set this up at the clubhouse. Mike offered to loan his SDR box to the clubhouse for a while so we could continue experimenting until we prove things out. STARS club has now purchased our own SDR device and we plan on making the swap this month so we can return the demo unit back to KB2FX.



Mike KB2FX, 20ft up (freezing his butt off...)

The big picture was to have a good monitoring station, taking advantage of the central location of the Nike Base Club station and tower. We made several attempts to put up our monitoring antenna late Summer and Fall but for one reason or another something always put a kibosh on it. Our goal was to place a wide band Discone Antenna near the top of the tower.

We will get back to this next spring when the professionals can help us do the work again. Until then our fall-back position was to have a couple of Amateurs take over with a temporary install. For now, Mike and yours truly took some matters into our own hands and installed the antenna on a temporary basis.

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We picked a very cold afternoon, just prior to the Buffalo Bills playoff game, so we had to work as fast as possible. I don't climb so I volunteered our "amateur" climber Mike, KB2FX to go up. His mission was to get as reasonably as high as he could and mount the new antenna to the tower. It turns out that Mike froze up there and ran out of wire ties since the plastic kept snapping in the frigid temperatures. Well, he made it up to about the 20ft level and we got the antenna installed and operational, just in time to go make it home for the great Bills playoff game!

The "discone" antenna is working great! The receive frequency range is very wide covering UHF, VHF and even works well in several HF bands. We have it connected to the SDR receiver and this is to stream over the internet. So when you are logged in monitoring remotely from the base, this is the antenna doing the work. It receives from all over Western NY and we only expect the receive footprint to get even better when we raise it up to the high tower level this spring.



Attention to safety, with fall hazard equipment in place, in case of lost grip on cold trusses.

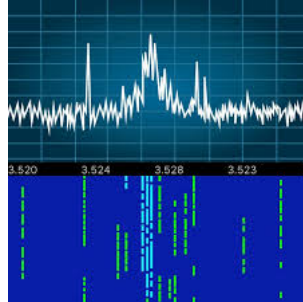


The hard-earned fruits of our labor!

Program for February Meeting

By Ken Pokigo KC2AYK

At the February meeting, I will be doing a presentation on SDR. This will be an excellent introduction to those who have been wondering what this is all about. The presentation will describe the concept of Software Defined Radio and provide some insight on how it works. Also, a short live demo is planned and a simple intro to the software. We hope to also provide a more in-depth presentation specifically on SDR software at a future meeting.





South Towns Amateur Radio Society 2020 Membership Renewal

Name _____ Call Sign _____

Address _____ Class _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

Email Address _____

Are you a member of the ARRL? YES NO

FOR FAMILY MEMBERSHIPS: Additional Names and Calls

Call _____ Name _____ Class _____

Call _____ Name _____ Class _____

Call _____ Name _____ Class _____

Dues: STARS annual dues payable by January 1

Single \$24

Family Membership \$27

Student Membership (to grade 12 or full-time college student) \$8

RETURN COMPLETED FORM AND DUES (checks payable to STARS) TO:

Patrick Groom KC2VWG
4320 Salem Drive
Blasdell NY 14219-1039