



the **RARA RAG**

Published by
ROCHESTER AMATEUR RADIO ASSOCIATION, INC.

VOL. 60

APRIL, 2008

NO. 8

Are we there yet???

By Frank Schramm, WB2PYD
Vice-President, RARA

Picture it: The sun is setting over a secluded tropical beach, the gentle sound of turquoise blue waves lapping at the shore, the smell of steak and shrimp grilling on the barbie, and the sky is turning vibrant orange. An assortment of antennas covering DC to daylight is glistening in the sky, there's no QRM, and gray line propagation is just opening up. You and a few close friends are now ready to fill the log book.

Have you ever dreamt about what it would be like to go on a DX-pedition? No, I don't mean sitting down at Charlotte Beach with a hand-talkie trying to reach the Toronto repeaters. I'm talking about getting on a ship and sailing off to some tiny remote speck of sand, where you set up a Gi-normous (that's "technical talk" for big) antenna farm, and a few radios with more watts than the light bulb isle at Lowes. Then you call CQ, un-key the mike and an untold number of stations come back chomping at the bit to put you in their log. Can you imagine what that must be like?

This past September, a group of 20 hams made their dream come true! They traveled land, sea and air to reach a tiny desert island called St. Brandon. The island is nearly a thousand miles off the East coast of Africa in the Indian Ocean. Once they got there they spent 3 weeks "camping" in tents and huts.

RaRa Regular MEETING

April 4, 2008 7:30 P.M.

Henrietta Fire Hall #1
3129 East Henrietta Road

DXpedition to St. Brandon

By Five Star DXers Association

They ran 12 operating positions on 6 through 160 meters, and logged over 130,000 contacts! Did you work 3B7C???

At the next RaRa meeting, The Five Star DXers Association and the Northern California DX Foundation will take us behind the scenes to see what it's like to actually execute such a journey. Things like: Arranging the transportation, designing and erecting all the antennas, setting up the rigs, and oh yes... the lost luggage! Remember this is a deserted island. They had to bring everything: Miles of wire, masts, beams, generators, and computers, in addition to food, water and clothing. The only thing they didn't have to bring was... well, um... fish. There was plenty of that already there waiting for them.

We'll get to see an unspoiled slice of paradise and what it's like to operate on the receiving end of a pile up. So join us on Friday April 4th and experience the trip of a lifetime. Don't forget to bring a friend or two... everyone's welcome! We'll have refreshments, awards and plenty of time to socialize!

Remember: If you are not receiving a copy of the RaRa RAG by e-mail, contact the editor. Summer program and meeting announcements will be via e-mail **only**. Don't miss out!

SILENT KEYS

J.G. Murray Ross, KZ2U

December 22, 2007

Leonard J. Cataldi, N2HS

February 16, 2008

Michael J. Eeckhout, NO2Z

February 26, 2008

Bruce M. Covey, W2SEG

March 1, 2008

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PUBLISHED BY

ROCHESTER AMATEUR RADIO ASSN., INC.

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VOL. 60 April, 2008 NO. 8

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The RaRa RAG is published monthly except July and August by the Rochester Amateur Radio Association, Inc., 24 Elaine Drive, Rochester, New York 14623. Standard Mail Permit #227 postage paid in Rochester, NY 14692

POSTMASTER - Send address changes to The RaRa Rag, P.O. Box 93333, Rochester, New York 14692-8333.

The Prez Sez

By Jim DiTucci, N2IXD
President, RARA

In this month's Prez Sez column I would like to share with you some recent revelations on the state of our hobby. Revelations uncovered by well-intentioned investigative researchers who were literally "shocked" at what they found.

Imagine, if you will, a time that seemed innocent... almost too innocent. Imagine a hobby born some one-hundred years ago under whose seemingly innocent and conservative surface dramatic technological changes were brewing; changes as obvious as wireless trans-continental communications and as subtle as spread-spectrum technology or perhaps some yet undiscovered or misunderstood electromagnetic medium. And imagine, if you will, a radical new perspective that scrutinized, criticized, and most importantly, challenged these changes, making the social turmoil of a nation apparent to its self-contented non-techno-geek citizens. But what if this wireless hobby was not as it appeared? What if it masqueraded as simple science fiction, and did not reveal its true agenda until some took a closer look? Let us examine how such an avocation can become a defining force in the culture of a nation and perhaps the world, a force that remains just as powerful one-hundred years after it first appeared. Imagine, if you will, how you would react if you were the subject of the episode you are about to experience. It is a tale of a mere Amateur, like you or me, who finds himself in a most distressing engagement. Let us investigate...

The View from the Other Side of the Couch.

By Gary Hoffman, KB0H

I try to get a little exercise each day by taking a walk with one of my co-workers. We chat about all manner of things, but inevitably I find myself talking about Amateur Radio. My co-worker's face will initially show confusion and then her eyes will glaze over. She doesn't understand what I'm saying. My efforts to simplify the conversation only make things worse.

I had always assumed that my co-worker thought of me as just another geek spouting techno-babble. But during one of our recent walks she laughed and said something like, "And Gary goes down into the basement to talk to his 'secret friends.'" She was kidding me, but it did make me wonder if perhaps some people have a completely different view of our hobby.

Read on to see how people *might* perceive us: I shifted uncomfortably on the couch. I'd prefer to be sitting, or maybe even standing.

"Tell me more about these friends of yours," said Dr. Weir.

"Well, they're just ordinary people, like me," I said.

"Ordinary,' like you," she repeated, writing on her pad.

"Yeah. We get together on the air once in a while and chat," I explained.

"On the air," Dr. Weir said, looking up with suspicion. "Do you believe that you can fly?"

"I didn't mean that literally," I said. "I just go down to my shack and talk to them."

"I see. And where is this shack?" Dr. Weir asked.

"In my basement," I replied.

Dr. Weir's eyes narrowed as she looked at me.

"You put a little building in your basement," she said, her pen poised over her pad. "Do you feel safe inside it?"

"'Shack' is just what we call it. It's just a corner of the basement," I said, hoping that was clear enough.

"So you meet your friends in the corner of your basement, in your 'shack,'" Dr. Weir said, making a note.

"Yes."

"Do they live there?"

"No!" I said, exasperated.

"Now don't get excited, Gary. I'm just trying to understand," Dr. Weir said soothingly. "So, if I went to your house and went down into your

basement, to your 'shack,' would I be able to see your friends?"

"Of course not," I said, gritting my teeth.

"Invisible friends," Dr. Weir said, writing it down.

"They're not invisible, and they're not really in my basement," I said. I was starting to get a headache.

"Very good, Gary. I think we're beginning to make some progress!" Dr. Weir said, beaming at me.

"I talk to them through my rig," I explained.

Dr. Weir's smile faltered. She looked at me sadly, then muttered, "Talks to friends who aren't there through a 'rig' in his 'shack,'" as she scribbled on her pad.

"Yes. It's a 2 meter rig. It's only good for local contacts," I said.

"So you can talk to your friends who aren't there, but are nearby," Dr. Weir said.

"Yes, other hams like me."

Dr. Weir silently mouthed the word "hams," blinked a few times, then wrote it down.

"Are there 'hams' elsewhere?" she asked.

"Oh yes, all over the world. With the right rig I could talk to any of them," I said.

"Really," Dr. Weir said.

She seemed interested, so I elaborated.

"It's not always easy. It depends on atmospheric conditions..."

Dr. Weir started writing again.

"...band conditions..."

Are you Moving or Temporarily Away?

By Dick Goslee, KG2I
Editor RaRa RAG

If you have moved or are going to move or you are going to be temporarily away please let the RAG editor know this. When we mail the RAG the envelope has a statement on it for the Post Office to notify us of address changes. We pay a charge for these corrections and if it is a new address that is great. However if you are just

I could see her say "bands" to herself as she wrote.

"...and a lot of other factors. Making contact can be very tricky. Sometimes a multi-hop will work..."

She kept writing.

"...gray line propagation..."

She wrote faster.

"...or even moon bounce."

Her eyes got very wide. She muttered "moon" and wrote faster still.

"Gary, Gary, Gary...", she sighed, still looking at her pad.

"Dr. Weir, may I call you Julia?" I asked.

"No," she said.

"Sorry," I said, chastised. "Could you loosen these restraints a little?"

"No," she said firmly. "Now, when did you first feel that you had turned into a ham?"

I sighed and tried to relax. Sometimes these sessions seemed to go on forever. (*Reprinted by permission: ARRL . All rights reserved.*)

There is a fifth dimension beyond that *which is known to man*. It is a dimension as vast as space and as timeless as infinity. It is the middle-ground between light and shadow, between science and superstition, and it lies between the pit of man's fears and the summit of his knowledge. This is the dimension of imagination. It is an area we call the 'Twilight Zone.' Happy April Fool's Day! Come meet your techno-geek friends at RARA on Friday, April 4.

going to be gone for a while we pay to just find out you were not there and didn't get the RAG. The "temporarily away" do not tell us when you will return so we don't know when to restart sending the RAG. Please help us out and keep us informed. Thanks.

Clubs & Groups wanting booth at the Hamfest

By Dick Goslee, KG2I
Asst. General Chairman

Any Clubs or groups that want a booth at the 2008 Rochester Hamfest must fill out a booth order form to be included. The form is available at:

www.rochesterhamfest.org/exhord8.htm.

Please include the names of up to 3 members who will be working the booth and who will require credentials necessary for admission to the Hamfest grounds. These credentials will be prepared and must be picked up at the Hamfest Hotel (The RIT Inn & Conference Center). They will be available starting at noon on Thursday May 29th in the front lobby. There is no charge for booths for groups.

For Sale

Free to good shack: Kantronics KPC-3 (V5), for packet radio, used between your transceiver and PC. Was used to track vehicles on maps in real time.

Includes original box, all manuals and AC adapter, as well as a DB-9 cable for your transceiver and a DB-25 cable for your PC. You pick up.

Call Russ Lipp (585)425-2953, N2EZX

RaRa Rag 20 Years Ago, April, 1988

By Ed Gable, K2MP
RARA Historian

RaRa Vice-President David Bernheisel, N2DPF, announced the April program as the popular Old Timers Night hosted by AWA Museum Curator Bruce Kelley, W2ICE. Bruce promised an interesting evening with a theme of *Keys: Large and Small, Famous and Unique*. The meetings

at this time were at the 40/8 Club on University Avenue and opened at 8:00 p.m.

Ed Holdsworth, N2EH, writing under the Rochester Hamfest banner, told of the activities of a group now called *Holdsworth's Coolies*. This group, still active today despite the loss of Ed, transforms an empty meeting hall into a grand Hamfest site, and deserve our continued support and thanks. N2EH also wrote to explain how *K2JD Engraving*, headed by Bob Lauzon, K2RL, was a non-profit group that made name badges with all proceeds turned over to RaRa. Reported then was the sale of new style RaRa Jackets. Three styles, three colors, two liners and with or without calls made the ordering process quite complicated. No problem though as Irv Goodman, AF2K, was listed as the contact point for any questions.

The April meeting also saw a going away party for Ed Gable, K2MP. Ed was bravely off to the Krackumopem Institute in Tada, Austria, to have the world's first complete brain transplant. The operation was a complete success except that the doctors agreed the brain would only function for 20 years and then turn Ed into a "silly old man." Doctors from the Krackumopem Institute refused to comment on a recent follow up exam saying they couldn't understand a word Ed said and he only mumbled something about old radios and cars made of fiberglass.

With regret it was reported that Durward Skiff, W2AVF, was reported as a silent key. A continuing advertiser was *W2YJ Commercial Communications* in Lancaster. From the Want Ads was an actual "wanted" ad where Jim, WB2WWV, was looking to buy a Richfield type astronomical telescope.

May Rag Deadline April 6, 2008

RVHFG New meeting site

By Andy Flowers, K0SM/2
President, RVHFG

Due to some scheduling conflicts at our old meeting place, the RVHFG is moving its

meetings for the rest of the year (that's March, April, May) to the following location, very near the old one. Please pass the word on to all who may be interested. The new site is:
Spencerport Wesleyan Church

2653 Nichols Street
Spencerport, NY 14559

Sidebands: Amateur Radio in the News

By Larry Wallnau, W2ZEY

Storm Spotters Trained. The Terre Haute [IN] *Tribune Star* reported that local amateur radio operators received training as spotters for major storms. The class was sponsored by Illiana Skywarn group of the National Weather Service. “Storm spotters can play an important and even critical role” said Dave Tucek, a meteorologist with the NWS in Indianapolis. He went on to note that the spotters are crucial for identifying dangerous storms at the ground level and that radar often is limited to events several thousand feet up. The meteorologist gave a presentation to more than 60 ham radio operators. Serious and dangerous storms are not foreign to the Midwest and ham radio operators have played an important role in emergency communications across what is known as Tornado Alley. Monroe County hams have received Skywarn training by the National Weather Service in Buffalo. RaRa will sponsor training again in March of 2009 for first time spotters and for those who must be recertified every 3 years.

http://www.tribstar.com/news/local_story_056233856.html

Ham Radio Arguments Heard Before Supreme Court? No! “Give me towers, or give me death.” Well, not exactly. The Supreme Court refused to hear a case that involved the controversy surrounding ham radio towers in Poolesville, MD. Neighbors filed a lawsuit after the towers were erected, claiming no notification was given prior to their construction. The 44-acre lot has, get this guys, four 190-foot ham radio towers. Yep, one-niner-zero [gasp]! The neighbors, Thomas Burruss and Alan Gaunoux, filed the lawsuit back in August 2004 against John Evans N3HBX of Clarksburg. Evans bought the land to pursue his interest in ham radio – that is, to

build these monuments to Marconi. When the Maryland Court of Appeals ruled that adjacent property owners are not required to be notified when a neighbor receives a routine building permit, the neighbors appealed to the Supreme Court. “While it’s disappointing, it’s not surprising given the sheer volume of cases they receive,” said James Parsons, the neighbors’ attorney. The neighbors claim the towers are an eyesore and might hurt property values. But according to Evans’ attorney Steven Van Grack, Evans was within his rights to build the towers and followed the proper procedures. “As a matter of law, the towers were constructed legally” he said. The basis of the county’s permit for the towers came under “allowable accessory use” which is a similar basis for things like swimming pools and detached garages. The Supreme Court’s refusal to hear the case means it will go back to the county legal system. “It’s really not the end of the matter. My neighbors are very upset with me for putting the towers up,” said Evans, who enjoys contesting among other ham activities. “...It’s become a vendetta, I think.” Evans is said to have spent \$160,000 in legal fees to keep his monoliths standing. [LW – In a manner of speaking... stay tuned!]

http://www.gazette.net/stories/022708/damanew62105_32381.shtml

Recyclables. Stop! Don’t throw those recyclables into the bin just yet. Geoff Haines, N1GY, wrote a great piece for the ARRL about various uses for small containers in the ham shack. Some uses you’d expect, others are quite ingenious, and I am sure your creativity can yield equally interesting result. Go to Haines’ ARRL page at:

<http://www.arrl.org/news/features/2008/02/23/1/?nc=twiardotorg> for a sample of his ideas.

**RaRa Memorial
Scholarship
Application Deadline
April 15, 2008**

Shorts & Sparks

By I. M. Zapped, FZZ1POP
Reporting From the Geek Isles

Computations for Geeks, Engineers, Number Crunchers and Hams. Here's a website that has just about every online calculator you need and many you don't. If what you need ain't here... then you really don't need it, now do you? Go to:

<http://www.calculatoredge.com/index.htm#general> with a fist full of data.

CQoogle? This is not a prank. Yes, it is official – we have our own search engine thanks to the folks at Google, called [what else?]

April Calendar of Events

- 4 - RaRa General Meeting – 7:30 PM –
Hen. Fire Hall #1, 3129 East Henrietta Rd
- 9 - RaRa Board of Directors – 5:30PM Dinner
Meeting, Northside Inn, East Rochester.
- 11 - RVHFG – 7:30 PM, monthly meeting.
See article page 5 for location

www.CQoogle. Go ahead, say CQoogle three times fast. Give it a test drive at your nearest wireless café.

Hambid Comes to a Computer Near You. There is a new auction website on the block [so to speak]. And this one is devoted to amateur radio enthusiasts. The site, at www.hambid.com is the creation of the Canvey Island ham, Justin Johnson G0KSC, Managing Director of Telco Consultants Limited. The pages have a clean, informative layout and when it is better known, it should be a viable alternative to the other E???? auction place.

- 15 - RDXA – 5:30 PM, Dinner, 7:30 Meeting
NapaGino's Restaurant, 2200 Penfield Rd.
Rtes 250 and 441
- 18 - RRRR – 8:00PM, Monthly Meeting at
Pittsford Town Hall, downstairs room.
- 19 - RaRa VE Testing session – 10:00AM
Bldg-9, Rm-3139 RIT Campus, Henrietta

**Rochester Hamfest
May 30-31, 2008**

**Memorial Scholarship is now
\$1000**

By Dick Goslee, KG2I
Treasurer, RARA

The deadline for submitting applications for the 8th annual RaRa Memorial Scholarship is April 15, 2008. Applications for the scholarship may be obtained at RaRa general meetings, by mail

at P.O. Box 93333, Rochester, NY 14692-8333 or by calling the RaRa phone at (585) 671-2424. Additional information and a copy of the application are available on the Rochester Amateur Radio Association web site at <http://www.rochesterham.org/> or from one of the officers.

RaRa Hotline
NEW NUMBER
(585) 671-2424
24 Hours a Day

**RaRa Amateur Radio
License Testing**

All Elements needed
to complete a license class.

**3rd Saturday of each
Month, September – April**

Registration – 10:00AM

Testing – 10:15AM

Room 3139, Building 9
(Park in Lot J)

Rochester Institute of Technology
1 Lomb Memorial Drive
Rochester, NY 14623

Contact Raj Dewan, N2RD
to reserve space.

Call (585) 703-4003 or e-mail n2rd@arrl.net



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