



# the RARA RAG

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NO. 8

## OLD TIMERS NIGHT

by Lloyd R. Caves, WB2EFU

The April meeting of RaRa is going to be the Annual Old Timers Night. It will be held on April 3 at the 40 & 8 Club on University Avenue. The topic will be "A Bargain in Used Equipment" or is it a bargain? Two experts, Bruce Kelley, W2ICE, and Ed Gable, K2MP, will tell and illustrate what to buy and what not. Do you know certain old tubes are worth only 10¢ while others are selling for \$1000? It will be an enlightening evening for those who attend.

This should be a meeting that not only can be enjoyed by all but one that we can learn from. The nice thing about learning something new is the ability to use this knowledge. Hamfest time is just around the corner which will allow us to practice what is learned to make the best deals and not get taken for a ride.

With April comes spring and weather that promises to be better. This should make the roads nicer to travel and easier for everyone to get to the meeting. Old Timers Night is a good meeting to come out and see all your friends that you haven't seen during the past few months of winter. Join us and have a cup of coffee, a doughnut, and some enjoyable eyeball QSO's.

## MICROWAVE CONFERENCE PLANNED

The Rochester VHF Group is currently making plans to host the 1992 Microwave Update Conference. This annual event brings together the nation's top Microwave enthusiasts to discuss new techniques, describe each others stations and what works or what didn't, and to generally meet those which are on the *Who's Who* list of microwave operation. Previous hosts have been the Central States and North Texas Microwave Societies with logistical, administrative and program support from the ARRL. The preliminary date is October 16/17, 1992 at the Holidome. Watch for further details on this outstanding Amateur event.

*Tnx K2MP/Scty Rochester VHF Group*

## APRIL 3rd MEETING

8:00 P.M.

40 & 8 Club

933 University Avenue

## 8 UPGRADE/BECOME NEW HAMS AT FEBRUARY TEST

by Bob, WE2T

Congratulations to Jack, N2KMJ, who upgraded from technician to Extra and the following: Bruce, N2FQN - upgrade to General; Jason, KB2NMN - upgrade to General (passed 20 WPM code); Steve, KB2OCO - upgrade to tech+; Mike, KB2LWY - upgrade to tech+; Staci, KB2OES - upgrade to tech+; Ed Brindle and John Lodice - new Ham-Tech.

Thanks also to Stan, WM3D; Barb, AA2CX; George, AA2FO; Sid, KD2WV; and Lou, K2ANC, Volunteer Examiners who helped me. Our next test session is Saturday, April 18; for more info see the September 1991 Rag or phone 334-1103.

## NEW ADDRESS FOR ALL FCC/AMATEUR APPLICATIONS

The FCC has a new address effective immediately for all Amateur license applications or modifications. Your FCC 610 forms go to: FCC, 1270 Fairfield Road, Gettysburg, PA 17325-7245.

*Tnx K2MP/ARRL Letter*

# Rochester HAMFEST

**MAY 15-16-17, 1992**

# the **RARA RAG**

Published by  
**ROCHESTER AMATEUR RADIO ASSOCIATION, INC.**  
P.O. Box 93333, Rochester, NY 14692-8333

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## MEMOIRS OF A CORTLANDT STREET REPAIRMAN

In my store we sold lots of vacuum tubes. Almost every store on the street had whitewash window signs pushing some special item; a "come-on" to get you into the store. "50L6 - 50 cents" or "35Z5 - 35 cents" were typical.

Power tubes and rectifiers were in great demand. When my boss went on his buying spree - he'd bring back, in addition to dozens of very tired radios, hundreds of tubes. In those days almost every neighborhood had a local radio repair shop. Burnt out tubes were saved in barrels and cartons. My boss would offer a few dollars for the entire barrel or carton (tubes in that condition were really worthless). He would literally bring back hundreds of tubes (usually with burnt out filaments (opens).

I had a wooden board with octal, octal and other tube sockets with the filament pins wired to a high voltage output AC transformer (400 - 500 VAC) secondary. A push button switch in the primary winding would apply 115 VAC. Typically, I would put in a tube, say a 50L6. Press the push button and 400 - 500 VAC would be applied to the filament pins. Often an arc would occur and the filament would weld itself back into its original condition.

Now, no one knew how long the filament would stay in an operating condition. But I would wash the tube out apply a very impressive label which was glued to the glass stating that "this" tube was a guaranteed tube for 90 days. Space was provided for that data. We sold these tubes as "new" for 50 cents; probably didn't cost more than 1 cent or 2 when the boss bought them. So between repairing sets, flashing tubes, cleaning up and the like, I was a pretty busy boy. I was popular, met a lot of people and enjoyed the work. It was a good time of my life. I was in my twenties and it was late in 1945.

Cortlandt Street was a mecca for the do-it-your-selfer. Out on the sidewalks, hardware stores plied all kinds of tools, drills, files, handles, paper, wrapping cord, etc, etc. It was a wondrous time to go around just looking, the area was in effect a highly organized flea market. The streets were crowded, especially on Saturday or during the daily lunch hour. When the crowds were greatest, this peddler would show up. Pushing a large console radio on wheels with the volume turned up playing some music he would start selling his noise filter for a buck. Actually he had a noise generator in the bottom of the set and would secretly flip a switch so everyone in the street

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Amateur Radio News Service

could hear the horrible noise coming out of the speaker. He would then hold up the homely dowdy filter, a small steel cased box with a female a-c connector within. He would plug the radio into the filter box and the filter cable into the power source. WOW, instant clarity for a buck. Of course no one saw him flip the switch of the noise generator to off.

There were great stores on Cortlandt Street. Davega, Heinz and Bolet, Hudson & Terminal Radio and on the corner flying a genuine barrage World War II balloon was the Army-Navy surplus store. Everything from inflatable rafts, helmets and rifles could be purchased. Across the street was a bar with dozens of succulent meats in the window. You could get a 25 cents meat sandwich and a 10 cents beer. Up the street near the entrance to the tubes (now the Path terminal) was a particular experience; a restaurant called the Exchange Buffet. You entered, ordered your food ate it and then on the way out told a cashier what you had to eat. This was an honor system arrangement. There are no more of these places around today – I wonder why?

This era was also the beginning of kit construction. Heathkit, EICO and Lafayette Radio were the big names in kit construction. I picked up quite a few side jobs (and dollars) wiring up kits bought by others who couldn't handle the soldering and assembly.

I remember my first Heathkit, a VTVM for about \$30. It worked just fine for years. Then there was the two chassis Williamson amplifier. My workbench still has a working 5-inch oscilloscope and my last Heathkit was an electronic keyer which works well. Its been said before but its worth repeating. There was such basic satisfaction when you completed a kit and it worked. It was an inner pleasure, hard to describe and never felt when one purchased a ready-made piece of equipment. Nostalgia aside, those were really the good old days for people of my age. I only hope I've been able to convey to you younger hams what it was like then. To you older guys, its been nice to remember.

*Bud, WB2WSZ, via Metroplex*

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**Rochester  
HAMFEST**

**MAY 15-16-17, 1992**

## APRIL CALENDAR

- 3 - RaRa Meeting - 8:00 p.m.  
40/8 Club, 933 University Avenue
- 9 - RAPS - 7:30 p.m.  
111 Westfall Road
- 10 - RVHF Group Meeting - 7:30 p.m.  
111 Westfall Road
- 17 - RRRRA Meeting - 7:30 p.m.  
Pittsford Town Hall
- 18 - RaRa VE License Testing - 8:30 a.m.  
111 Westfall Road
- 21 - RDXA Meeting - 7:30 p.m.  
111 Westfall Road
- 24-26 - Dayton Hamvention®

*Check with clubs to verify time and place of meeting.*

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## MARITIME MOBILE LOVE BOAT STYLE

One cold January day earlier this year my company tossed me the tough assignment of leading a group of investors on a Caribbean cruise. I accepted this harsh treatment manfully agreeing sagely that someone would have to make this sacrifice. Secretly I realized that for someone from Nebraska with an icicle on the end of his nose five months of the year, this probably wasn't going to be too hard to take. Hot Dog!

On the way home that night, I got to thinking what a great opportunity this would offer to do some "maritime mobiling" something us peasants from Nebraska, a thousand miles from blue water, seldom have the opportunity to do.

In scrounging around for gear, I finally came up with a tired old SSB CB rig that I had on hand. It had been converted to 28Mc. and on its better days, it would, if coaxed, put out ten watts. For an antenna I cooked up a three-section, bamboo cane fishing pole and planned to stick a hunk of wire on the thing and tie the whole shabang to the ship's funnel or any place else that I could hang it. Unfortunately, even broken down, the fishing pole wouldn't fit into a suitcase – I had to hand carry it. Later, going through the Miami airport, some smart clown sounded off with "Hey, hayseed, where is your bobber and can of worms?"

As the ship was of Greek registry, leased to an Italian line operating out of an American port, San Juan, I was afraid I was in for a legal hassle in trying to get clearance to operate. Not knowing where to start, I asked some of the fellows on 20M what they would suggest – and got an earful of suggestions. If you ever want to know how to start a war, or how to stop one, or what to do on the second day of your trip to the moon, just ask some of the authorities on the high end of 20M. If you are still in doubt, go down to the low end and you will get a different opinion from the experts who hang out there – every problem known to man can be solved by the oracles on twenty meters.

As it turned out, the best advice I got was, as usual, from my wife. She said, "Why don't you get off that stupid radio and call the Greek Embassy in Washington?"

Following this advice I got on the phone and started calling to see if I could make peace with the Greeks, the Italians, the steamship line, the ship's captain, the radio operator – and with our own FCC. The people in the Greek Embassy in Washington were nice, but didn't know what I was talking about. They said it was OK with them if I could square it with the Italians. The Italians were not so nice. Like the Greeks, they didn't

know what I was talking about either but said, "We don't know what you're trying to do, and could care less. Hang up and don't call again." The steamship people in Chicago said it was fine with them IF the captain and radio operator weren't unhappy. Finally, since I didn't want the FCC to take my picture off their piano, I called their office in Kansas City and got the best help yet – they simply said "Have fun".

I left Omaha in a typical Nebraska blizzard and arrived in San Juan where the temperature was a blood thinning 82 degrees – and there was my LOVE BOAT, the thousand ton DAPHNE, a marvel in white, floating majestically in the crystal clear Caribbean. I had heard that the only two decisions that you make while on a cruise is whether to eat or drink, and I couldn't wait to find out if this was true.

After piling my gear on board, I hightailed it for the radio and met the radio operator who was a ham from Athens. At the time I was so steamed up and in such a hurry to get on the air that I didn't get his name or his call – but he was a great guy. He spoke perfect English, and told me that he had no objection to my operation and to hop to it. He said he would be around later to watch the fun. I was a little leery that my 10 watt bomb under his antenna might rattle his cage a little, but he said not to worry, even if I had two kilowatts there would be no problem.

Next was the captain, but as ships' captains speak only to God, the radio operator steered me to his number two man, the purser, who acts probably like St. Peter does in Heaven. The purser gave me his blessing (in Greek) and said he didn't care if I operated IF the electrician didn't mind. Well the electrician was a really friendly guy and he solved all of my problems. The first thing he did was to ferret out a waterproof electrical outlet, which on a ship isn't easy. The operating position he picked was something you would dream about – a deck chair on the sun deck between the swimming pool and the bar. Smiling mess boys with towels over their arms were there to keep you supplied with the necessities of life, food and drink. Pretty girls in skimpy bikinis were all around as was a big crowd of admiring people who were very impressed with this "skilled expert" who was going to talk to the people all over the world. Did I love it! Omaha was NEVER like this.

Like most hams, I have never fired up a new rig or put up an antenna and had everything work right the first time. So far, I had had too much luck – I couldn't believe this was happening – not to me – EVERYTHING was falling into place. Even the SWR on my cane pole antenna that was sway-

ing so majestically in the breeze some 70 feet above the water came out at 1:1. Well, with all the girls oh'ing and ah'ing and with the admiring crowd listening to my every word, I, the skilled expert, reached over to turn on the rig absolutely convinced that my good luck was going to end here and that ten meters would be VERY VERY DEAD.

I couldn't believe it when out the speaker I heard DK5PV from Munster, Germany, clear his throat, count to three twice, and then call CQ. With fear and trembling I called DK5PV – and glory be, he came back to me – we were in business. Happy day. I looked up at that cane fishing pole swaying gently with the roll of the ship and thought, "Boy, this is sure better than using you for fishing".

When I signed with Helmut DK5PV the earth fell in – or maybe it was the ocean. Suddenly I was the center of attraction – half of the hams in the world seemed to be calling me – something that never happens to me Omaha. For the next five days I wouldn't have traded places with President Bush – or even Burt Reynolds. Warm sun, pretty girls, good food, good drink, good company and DX like you wouldn't believe.

Fortunately for my company, ten meters is dead at night and that forced me to do my "thing" with the group that I was with and to half-justify what my company had in mind when they sent me down there. Incidentally, by the time I got home, I had cooked up a pretty good story about the sacrifices I had made – the good I had accomplished – and how hard I had worked. The Simon Legree that I work for bought my story as I'm still employed.

Unfortunately all good things come to an end and so did the cruise – and so did my DX. Like Cinderella when her coach turned back into a pumpkin, my rig is now back in my Ford. I am no longer a maritime mobile, just mobile. People talk to me now only when they can't talk to anyone else. Instead of getting rave signal reports like I did on the ship, the standard reply now is "Yeah, I can hear you but the S-meter isn't moving."

When I got home Nebraska never seemed cold and the snow never seemed deeper – but ohhhh.... do I have memories.

de Hugh KOGHK via HAM HUM



## THE RaRa RAG YEARS AGO

by Ed Gable, K2MP

**20 YEARS AGO – APRIL 1972:** RaRa President Rich Koehn, WB2SNA, reports that the Board, headed by El Wagner, WB2BNJ, has started to prepare a slide show depicting ham radio in the Rochester area. Writing for the code classes, Hanson D. Kees, WB2NSD, reports that Ed Holdsworth, WA2EKR; Larry Brassie, WN2JBI; and Dave Hassett, K2SQI, are this year's instructors. \$2.50 will get you an advance Hamfest ticket from Bob Lozen, WB2ERE. W2MPM wrote in his FM Column that there are now 269 two-meter repeaters in the U.S., 108 of those are 34/94. There were 18 repeaters in the country on 450 MHz. RRRR requested that everyone shift to NBFM. Joel Payne, W2UXP, and Herb Wescott, K2BBJ, were silent keys. Old timers will remember Fran Sherwood, W2QCF, who was published in *Broadcast Engineering* favoring the continuation of AM over CSSB for SW broadcasting. *JC Sales* in North Chili, featuring 2-meter rigs, is a new advertiser.

**40 YEARS AGO – APRIL 1952:** The RDXA group complains that their 1949 ARRL CW DX contest club score of 636,347 will be hard to beat due to conditions. The two weekend event was won by W2FBA with 135 Q's in 78 countries. Placing well were W2's: ICE, DOD, SAW, and TXB. The Rochester Mobile Club celebrates 3 years of service. The VHF group announced that the formation of a Friday night CD net on 2-meters was successful. A new call on two is W2SNI with a Harvey Wells Bandmaster. (50 watts in, 2 watts out!!) The new RaRa mobile truck and generator will be on display at the RaRa Hamfest to be held at the Elk's Club on Clinton Avenue. The brochure featured the availability of steam rooms and bowling – for men only. *Hunter Electronics*, 223 East Avenue, was one of four advertisers.

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## OPERATING FROM THE GALAPAGOS ISLANDS

by Jim Frederick, K2GBR (ex-W9KEE)

I recently went to the Galapagos Islands with a group of 12 people from the Rochester area (including my XYL, WW2A), consideration initially being given to operating a ham rig during the trip. I wrote to the ARRL for licensing info and was told to contact the Guayaquil Radio Club in Ecuador for details. I received back a letter indicating that I could operate in the Galapagos Islands as "HC8 Portable K2GBR". However, in considering packing I found that there was not space for ham gear because of the bulk of photographic and snorkling necessities.

We flew to Quito, Ecuador via Miami. There were numerous ham beams and dipoles on the roofs of high rise buildings in Quito and I lamented that I did not have a ham rig. After a day in Quito, we flew to Guayaquil on the coast of Ecuador, and then on to an air strip on San Cristobal Island in the Galapagos group (about 550 miles west of Ecuador). We went by small boat out to our 65 foot charter boat, "Islas Plazas", that we would use for eating, sleeping, and traveling from island-to-island during our stay.

On approaching the "Islas Plazas" I noticed that the boat had an inverted-V dipole antenna that appeared to be about  $\frac{1}{2}$  wave length for 20 meters. On checking the bridge of the boat I found that a compact ICOM transceiver tuned to 14377 Kc was being monitored. I was surprised that it was not the usual 3rd world commercial crystal-controlled frequency rig. I later received permission from the Captain to use this rig.

I operated the rig one evening while anchored off Santa Cruz Island just south of the equator. The boat was oriented into the wind north and south, this positioning the dipole antenna broadside east and west. The antenna, however, appeared to be omni-directional. I tuned the ICOM rig to 14260 Kc and it loaded-up to about 25 watts. I called "CQ Rochester NY area" for a bad-news WX report for the delight of the rest of the Rochester contingent. No one from Rochester came back, but an excited N2MGT from Syracuse indicated that my sig was Q5 and S5 and that it was snowing and 15 degrees in Syracuse. After this first QSO, it seemed that every ham in the world was calling me. I then proceeded to work several stations from Northeastern US, Florida, most of Western Europe and ZL land. An effort was made to come back to younger-sounding voices and to new-ham-sounding US call signs. I only operated one evening with the boat's radio as

the Captain appeared somewhat ill-at-ease at not being able to monitor his calling frequency and not understanding my English language QSOs.

I think that I was as thrilled at having the opportunity of briefly operating a ham rig from the Galapagos Islands as was Charles Darwin on seeing for the first time the most unique flora and fauna living at this unusual QTH.

73s, Jim

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## MARCH MEETING HEADLIGHTS



Jim Taylor, W2OZH, our March speaker answers questions from the audience.



Dave Hassett, K2SQI, wins the Gift Certificate drawing, and it is presented by Pete Secrist, WB2SUN.

# RADIOS, COMPUTERS TARGETS OF HEIGHTENED AIR SECURITY

Heightened commercial airline security has not yet prevented amateurs from carrying radios and computers aboard domestic flights, but hams should be prepared for greater scrutiny of electronic devices. By early February, domestic carriers were under a "Level 4" security alert but several major carriers said their policies concerning radios had not changed; they were simply being more stringently enforced.

Amateurs always should carry their FCC license with them and also should be prepared to remove batteries from radios if asked to do so, as well as open lap top computers and be prepared to turn them on upon request.

Some international carriers, British and German in particular, may have much tighter restrictions, depending on point of departure and destination. All amateurs traveling on international flights should consider the possibility they may not be allowed either to carry or to check as baggage radios and/or computers, and should check with carrier about the possibility of making arrangements in advance.

*Tnx ARRL Letter*

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## Rochester HAMFEST

MAY 15-16-17, 1992

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### "WANTED" OLD RADIOS

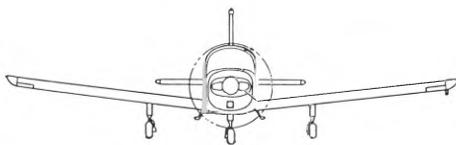
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