



the RARRA RAG

Published by
ROCHESTER AMATEUR RADIO ASSOCIATION, INC.

VOL. 46

APRIL 1994

NO. 8

"WINNING ON THE HILL"

This is the title of a video which "documents N2WK VHF/UHF/SHF contest team attempt for National Top 5 Honors in the June VHF QSO Party. The team puts up and takes down 7 towers and 22 antennas over the course of 4 days for this 1 weekend contest. The video shows all aspects of this tremendous effort from planning and logistics to operating and celebrating!!" These words, from our April speaker, Vic Gauvin, K1JUL, just about tell the story. Vic was there and had a hand in the making of the weekend, the video and most likely did some celebrating too. Join us at the April meeting for a relaxing look at life "On The Hill". See you April 1st, same place, same time.

— RH

RVHFG 1994 AWARDS BANQUET

Another REMINDER! The VHF banquet will be at the Green Lantern Inn, in Fairport. This Registered Historic Landmark is at 99 South Main Street (223-0556). It is next to the corner, on Rt. 31F (S. Main Street), and Rt. 250 (Nine Mile Point Road or Fairport Road). It is the four corners of Fairport. The dinner will be a sit down (dinner served) for \$14.00 per person. Bring your LADY. Our choices of food will be London Broil, Roast Turkey Breast, or Sole Amandine (fish to most of us). We will meet and greet around 6 p.m. and eat around 7 p.m.

The banquet will be the 23 of April. This Saturday night is a great gift for us, as the Dayton Hamfest is the following week, confirmed for 28, 29, 30 and May 1st.

Both Irv (AF2K) and I have tickets for sale. When you get your tickets, try to let us know what you want to eat. We have hired a Diskjockey, one of us, who will perform that evening.

Please let me know if there is anything special you will need or want, so you can make this outstanding event, and we can make arrangements. Remember, this is NOT a formal dinner.

Co-Chairpersons:

Len, WA2ZNC, and Marian, KB2KJV

RaRa MEETING

APRIL 1, 1994

Henrietta Fire Hall
3129 East Henrietta Road
8:00 p.m.

Nominations for Club Officers

PUBLIC SERVICE EVENTS FOR 1994

June 4 – American Diabetes Association Bike Tour, Hamlin Beach Park

July 31 – Stuart Horse Trails

August 16-21 – Walnut Hill Driving Competition

September 14 – Ginna Pre Drill (subject to change)

October 12 – Ginna Drill (subject to change)

To volunteer for any of these events call Ed Holdsworth or sign up at a RaRa Meeting.

LICENSE EXAM TESTING

by Barbara, AA2CX, and George, AA2FO

CONGRATULATIONS ... to nine members of the amateur radio community who either got their licenses, upgraded, or passed exam elements at the recent RaRa testing session of February 19th. They are: Joanna Carey, Tony Marchee, Mark Dunn, Dexter Deeley, Harold Kohl, Gregory Van Scott, Linda Granita, Joseph Granita, and Duncan Jones.

Enjoy your new privileges.

Our next session will be on April 16th, at 111 Westfall Road, starting at 9:00 a.m. Registration begins at 8:30 a.m.

See you there.

Rochester HAMFEST

MAY 20-21-22, 1994

the **RaRa Rag**

Published by
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P.O. Box 93333, Rochester, NY 14692-8333

Editor **Neal Eckhardt, WB2EKP**
80 Authors Avenue, Henrietta, NY 14467 (716-359-2672)

Managing Editor **Dick Goslee, K2VCZ**
24 Elaine Drive, Rochester, NY 14623 (716-334-1762)

Advertising Manager **Dick Goslee, K2VCZ**
24 Elaine Drive, Rochester, NY 14623 (716-334-1762)

THIS IS K2JD

by Jim Hood, N2HHV

Being the first harmonic of a local ham I've had the opportunity to attend RaRa meetings and functions for the last 25 years or so. This year I was fortunate enough to become RaRa's secretary and gain even more exposure to the inner workings of this fantastic organization. I continue to be amazed at all of the things that RaRa does for local hams, affiliated organizations and the community.

You may not be aware of all that goes on "behind the scenes" in RaRa. So, we've decided to try a new approach to provide you with the latest rag-chewing, mail-reading material. Each month we'll collect and publish all the little tidbits of information that, by themselves, might not be sufficient for an entire *RAG* article. If you have a tidbit, please jot it down and send it in to the *RAG*. We're always looking for more news from local hams and ham organizations.

This is K2JD, your club station!

VOL. 46 APRIL 1994 NO. 8

OFFICERS:

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Membership Chairman: Irv Goodman, AF2K
Licensing Course Director: Neal Eckhardt, WB2EKP
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Amateur Radio News Service

RaRa RECEIVES DONATION

The Bill Koch Ski League made a friendly donation to RaRa after this year's Mid-Atlantic Ski Festival. RaRa public service ARES/RACES volunteers provided radio communications during the event.

ROCHESTER WEATHER GETS BUFFALOED

The Rochester chapter of SKYWARN reports that, as of June 1, 1994, the Rochester office of the National Weather Service will no longer issue public weather warnings. Weather watches and warnings for Monroe, Livingston, Wayne, Ontario, Seneca and Yates counties will originate from the Buffalo National Weather Service Office. Rochester SKYWARN will be activated from Buffalo, but will continue to report to the Rochester National Weather Service office.

DID YOU KNOW that last year RaRa donated several thousands of dollars worth of radio equipment to Monroe County? RaRa also purchased several thousand dollars of equipment for the club station and area digipeaters. These funds were raised by the Rochester Hamfest and K2JD Engraving. Your RaRa membership dues cover your *RAG* subscription and many of the fixed costs of running your club, but a great deal of our community service dollars come from the Hamfest and K2JD Engraving. Help RaRa help the local community by purchasing from K2JD Engraving and attending the Rochester Hamfest!

OTHERS BACK LEAGUE'S OPPOSITION TO 'INSTANT OPERATING' PROPOSAL

The ARRL has told the FCC that virtually every individual and group who commented on a Commission proposal for instant operating privileges for new amateurs agreed that the idea is a bad one, and urged that the proposal be abandoned.

In reply comments to the FCC on its proposal, in PR Docket 93-267, the ARRL said that "almost without exception", those who had commented – 77 of them – agreed with the League that the idea should be shelved in favor of electronic filing of license applications with the FCC.

The ARRL said that the mechanisms for such electronic filing of Form 610s "cannot be more than a few months away at worst".

PLAN WOULD INVITE ABUSE

The League said that the FCC plan would invite abuse because, among other reasons, "The Commission itself suffers an inability to stem the tide of unlicensed operators in any radio service, because of limited enforcement resources".

The Commission was "inviting abuse" by proposing that unlicensed persons choose a call sign and go on the air without an FCC-issued license, suggesting that anyone wanting to use amateur frequencies could, under the FCC proposal, simply concoct a call sign without ever taking an examination or submitting a Form 610 to the FCC.

The ARRL said that two groups the FCC used as examples of temporary operating authority – the Marine Radio Service and the Private Land Mobile Radio Service – each "suffers a severe problem with unlicensed, not to mention undisciplined, operation".

In response to a counterproposal by the W5YI-VEC, that the FCC's plan be modified to avoid abuse by having volunteer examiners assign temporary call signs from blocks allocated to them by the FCC (instead of a more random assignment scheme proposed by the FCC), the League said this would be an unbearable burden and responsibility on the VEs.

The League said that, at any rate, the Communications Act gives no basis for the FCC to delegate its authority to assign call signs, including determining a licensee's basic qualification, which VEs would have no way of doing.

WOULD NOT REDUCE INQUIRES

The ARRL, in its reply comments, observed that although one rationale for the Commission's proposal was that it would reduce telephone calls

APRIL CALENDAR

- 1 - RaRa Meeting - Henrietta Fire Hall
3129 East Henrietta Road - 8:00 p.m.
 - 14 - RAPS Meeting - 111 Westfall Road
7:30 p.m.
 - 16 - RaRa VE Testing - 111 Westfall Road
8:30 a.m.
-

to the FCC from people awaiting their first license, on the contrary, the proposal would probably result in *more* calls – from amateurs inquiring about the legitimacy of temporary call signs they heard on the amateur bands.

The League once again asked that the proceeding be terminated in favor of electronic filing as soon as that is feasible, saying it stands by its position that operating authority must stem directly from the FCC, and that it would be a serious mistake to allow this federal status to be diluted in the interest of some short-termed expedient.

REPEATER MEMORIES

Happy memories were floating around the room at last month's meeting. Mike Rink, WB2HYP, had lots of slides of old and new repeater equipment and sites. The audience joined in the program with personal tidbits and explanations while Mike and Dave Sewhuk, N2GH, now of Rochester, formerly of Buffalo told of the Cherry Creek and other western repeaters. As an added surprise, Mike brought along some slides of the 28/88 repeater when it was on top of Kodak Office. Joe Hood did an good job of bringing back the people and places pictured, with the help of Tim Magee and others. A good program made a good meeting even better.

--RH

- On page 42 of the February issue of *COMMUNICATIONS* magazine is a picture of some very important people in the radio world. These people are all members of the RADIO CLUB OF AMERICA, who gathered for the 84th Anniversary Dinner of the Club. That's not all! All pictured were elevated to "Fellows" in the club, in recognition of their achievements in furthering the goals of the club. Guess who was in the right-top of the group? Our own Ron Jakubowski, better known as K2RJ, now living in Solon, Ohio. Congratulations, Ron!!! (More on this later, I hope.)

--RH

WHERE DOES ALL OF THAT NEW EQUIPEMNT COME FROM?

For those of you that have been down in the club station lately, the proliferation of new equipment is quite evident. For those of you on packet, the K2JD digipeters are multiplying like rabbits. You may ask yourself where all of this state-of-the-art equipment is coming from at the low membership dues paid by RaRa members.

You will be interested to know that none of this equipment was bought with members dues monies. You may wonder where the thousands of dollars came from to purchase this new stuff. The two prime sources of money for equipment come from the Hamfest (no surprise here), and from K2JD engraving. What is K2JD Engraving? K2JD Engraving is a team of club members that travel to many area hamfests and “Grind Out” callsign badges. These volunteers work long hours (and drive many miles) to donate their time for the good of the club. It is not easy work dragging all the equipment necessary to make callsign badges and hats to each hamfest.

So what can I do to help support my club? Whenever possible, give your business to K2JD Engraving. Not only do they make ham related hats and badges, but badges can be custom made for other clubs or businesses. Need a name plate (or callsign plate) for your desk? K2JD Engraving can come to the rescue. Do you need jackets or T-shirts for your club, business or event? K2JD Engraving can probably do it for you. The next time you need a callsign badge at an area hamfest, look for K2JD Engraving. Your hard earned money can go to help purchase new equipment for the club station rather than for new equipment for another vendors house.

Remember the green and yellow RaRa jackets. K2JD Engraving is the new supplier of jackets and shirts to RaRa. No longer do we need a minimum order to get you your jacket. We can have a jacket for you in a choice of colors in less than a month. It's time to trade in that old RaRa jacket for a new color scheme that fits your personality.

For information on RaRa jackets or T-shirts, contact Lloyd Caves at 671-7079 or any RaRa meeting. For badges, hats or quotes on anything else for your business, organization or event, call Ed Holdsworth at 624-1929. Let's keep that new equipment coming by supporting our clubs money making committees.

THE RaRa RAG YEARS AGO

by Ed Gable, K2MP

20 YEARS AGO – APRIL 1974:

Meeting then at the Monroe County Farm and Home Center, RaRa featured Old Timers night with, who else, Bruce, W2ICEE. Bruce also took pen in hand and filled most of this issue with an interesting insight into early SSB and those who were early into that mode in Rochester. Not finished yet, Bruce compiled a list of all RaRa Presidents from 1930 to 1973. A copy of a very unusual letter was published written by Eddie Dunn, W2ECH, to the proprietors of *Bryan's Drug Store* on Main Street. This was where area Hams would gather every Saturday at Noon for lunch after visiting *Rochester Radio*. The store had just closed after a terrible fire and Eddie expressed our sympathy to the family and thanked them for years of service to the Hams at Lunch gang. A new advertiser with a quarter page ad complete with photograph of their hot selling FM pre-amp product was *Hamtronics, Inc.* of Belmont Road in Greece.

40 YEARS AGO – APRIL 1954:

The Rochester VHF group reported that “fix-it-nights” were popular and a lot of the gang got help getting rigs working. You might even get Chet, W2VVG, to grind a crystal while you wait. That singing sensation Warren Phillips even showed up at a meeting. (Free burned out 807 to anyone who can ID the real Warren Phillips – Ed) RaRa officers at this time were Bob, W2CZT, Prez; Fred, W2PFI, VP and Bob, W2RUJ and Leland, W2YUE, Secretary and Treasurer. The Rochester Mobile Club reported on a very successful Progressive Dinner Party. Hank Blodgett, W2UTH, reporting for the RDXA reported terrible, followed by lousy and lousier, conditions for ARRL DX weekends. None-the-less, Sax, W2SAW, managed 102 countries in only 206 QSO's. From the want ads, you could buy a Hammarlund Super-Pro for \$125 from Vic, W2RIS.

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CALIFORNIA AMATEUR HELPS IN ARREST OF TWO SUSPECTS

Amateur Radio made headlines in Acton, California, last month, when 36-yearold Chris Killian, N7IOV, helped in the capture of two robbers. According to the *Antelope Valley News* of Lancaster, California, Killian was approached by an armed robber in a McDonald's restaurant, inquiring about Killian's hand-held.

When the man and an accomplice left the eatery, Killian, who the paper said is a "reserve deputy", followed him and relayed their route to another amateur, who contacted sheriff's deputies. The two suspects were picked up that night and charged with the hold-up.

Killian told the *News* that he ordinarily doesn't carry a radio with him in his car but that he'd been using the hand-held that previous weekend to "test repeater stations".

Tnx W6DDB, WA7FCG

STICKER AND DECALS REMOVAL TIP

Ever have trouble removing decals from your transceiver, car windows, bumpers or other pieces of gear? Even price tag stickers can be tough to get off and attracts dirt and grime. This tip from the finish folks at Ranger Boat Company can make sticker and decal removal quick and easy. Use a common hair dryer and gradually heat the entire decal. After the decal peels off, use simple white vinegar or WD-40 to remove any sticky residue. Wash with soap and water and you got it.

Tnx The Readout

Rochester HAMFEST

May 20-21-22, 1994

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FCC ANALYZES TRANSMITTER SIGNATURE TO NAIL VIOLATOR

A Fairfax (Virginia) ham radio operator whose phoney Maydays created a wild-goose chase in the West Indies last summer has agreed to reimburse the U.S. Coast Guard \$50,000. Jorge Mestre, NS3K, age 50, also was sentenced on May 12th to 60 days home confinement with work release privileges and one-year probation. In addition, he was ordered to perform 200 hours of community service, pay a fifty dollar special assessment and to permanently surrender his Amateur Extra Class ham-ticket. He could have received up to six years imprisonment and a fine of \$250,000.

Actually the problem of phoney distress calls involving Mestre first came to the attention of the FCC in 1991. At that time the FCC circulated a press release saying they were investigating false distress signals which caused the Coast Guard to deploy a helicopter to the Duck Island, North Carolina area.

On November 10th, 1991, at approximately 10:00 PM a ham operator heard a distress call from a station with a Spanish accent identifying itself as KD4NTT. The station stated that he had run aground and was taking on water on a reef 20 miles east of Duck Island.

Two or three months later, a similar incident happened supposedly off the coast of Cuba. In both cases, the FCC quickly DF'ed the signal once they were alerted by the amateurs. And both times the position readings pointed to Northern Virginia.

Unfortunately, however, the FCC didn't have time to get a mobile van out to do close in "fine tuned" DF'ing. They could only identify a transmission area of about 20 miles.

On August 7th, 1992, false distress communications consisting of both single sideband (SSB) voice and Morse Code transmissions were heard on the infamous 20 meter frequency of 14.313 MHz. They falsely reported a sinking vessel off the Turks and Caicos Islands in the British West Indies. It was also incorrectly reported that six persons aboard the ship were in the water and needed to be rescued. For a period of about two hours during the evening, the concocted distress communications continued intermittently and included the internationally recognized Morse Code distress signal, "SOS".

The distress signals were monitored by other amateur radio operators who notified the Coast Guard and the FCC. Almost immediately, the

Commission's long range direction finding network swung into action and began monitoring the signals. Again, the signals were traced to Northern Virginia. The Coast Guard, however, was unwilling to risk ignoring what might have been a real sinking and continued its searching of the West Indies. U.S. Coast Guard rescue policy requires that it commit the assets necessary for locating a vessel in distress and for assuring the safety of individuals aboard such a vessel.

Upon receiving notification of the distress signal, the Coast Guard immediately began a major search and rescue operation. Coast Guard medium endurance cutters, fixed wing aircraft and two helicopters were deployed to the area claimed to be the sinking ship's location. Additionally, the Government of the Turks and Caicos Islands launched their patrol craft, and merchant marine ships in the area were advised of a vessel in distress.

The West Indies search ultimately cost the Coast Guard more than \$100,000. But it really was not an isolated incident. In the first half of 1992 alone more than 180 fake distress calls were received by the 5th Coast Guard District which is based in Portsmouth, Virginia, and covers waters from South Carolina to New Jersey.

Responding to such hoax distress calls diverts crucial Coast Guard equipment and personnel that may be needed to respond to real emergencies to conduct legitimate search and rescue operations, poses unnecessary threats to the safety of Coast Guard personnel, and is extremely costly to the government.

The FCC recorded the phoney transmissions. Using the direction finding data, subsequent detailed technical analysis of tape recordings of the hoax transmissions, and information provided by other ham radio operators, the FCC was able to later identify Mestre's amateur radio station as the source of the deceptive distress messages.

Later on that night about 11:15 PM, another ham operator in the Fairfax, Virginia, area called the FCC and suggested that the distress calls might be a hoax. He said the transmissions were originating so close to him that they were overloading his equipment. He also believed the Spanish-accented voice sounded like a neighbor who had been known to use false DX call signs on the amateur air waves in the past.

The FCC used basically the same method of analyzing radio signals that they developed in the famous "Captain Midnight" and "Playboy" satellite jamming cases. In both of these instances, the FCC was able to identify uplink transmitters that over-took satellite TV programming. In both instances, different satellite uplink operators jam-

med HBO and "Playboy" with video messages because they opposed scrambling and X-rated movies. How the technology works is interesting.

There are certain parameters of a signal that are peculiar to a specific radio transmitter. One of these features is the "turn on" time until a rig gets to full power on a specific frequency. Mestre was using CW during the August 7th incident which essentially is the same as turning the transmitter off and on. The FCC simply measured and carefully analyzed the signal rise time with an oscilloscope. By examining the radio signal "signature", the FCC was able to identify two radio transmitter "turn on" characteristics that when matched with those qualities contained on another recording from that same transmitter as being responsible for sending the false Morse Code distress messages. The two transmitter characteristics measured included the transmitter's instantaneous frequency and power.

In theory, a radio transmitter should turn on instantly with full power on the frequency it is set to. In the real world, however, radio transmitters do not ...and cannot do that, just as automobiles cannot accelerate instantly to highway speed. The actual variations from an ideal hypothetical transmitter "turn on" are both a function of the transmitter equipment design and the precise value of the particular electronic components in the transmitter which are seldom their exact nominal or ideal value. Two different transmitters adjusted to level in frequency will differ in their measured "turn on" characteristics. A study of their instantaneous frequency and magnitude of output power during the first one hundred milli-seconds or less after a radio transmitter is turned on conclusively reveals different and distinctive characteristics – even between different transmitters of the same manufacturer and model.

The subsequent testing of Mestre's radio equipment, which was seized under a federal search warrant, confirmed that his station was indeed responsible for the hoax transmissions. He is also suspected of having been involved in at least three additional false distress cases within the last several years.

Jorge Mestre, who had a relatively high level government job with the Nuclear Regulatory Agency, later came forward with his attorney and offered to plea bargain. This way just as the U.S. Attorney was getting ready to go to the Grand Jury to obtain a felony indictment. Mestre pled guilty on Friday, February 12 in Federal District Court in Alexandria, Virginia.

Besides the \$50,000 single lump sum repayment, Mestre agreed to surrender his amateur radio license and dispose of his ham equipment within 60 days. He must also participate in an alcoholic counseling and rehabilitation program.

Tnx W5YI Report via The Readout



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RADIOS ON AIRPLANES

Airlines apparently have thrown in the towel when it comes to preventing passengers from using radios while on board. Since the local oscillators in lesser-quality transistor radios do not have adequate shielding, they wreak havoc on the sensitive navigation equipment in the cockpit. Trying to keep fliers from listening to a radio is not easy. The solution appears to be giving the customers what they want, but not the way they want it, however. Logic decrees that they want radio and they will get it from radios owned and operated by the airlines. That way passengers, can listen to their music and the airlines can rest satisfied in the knowledge that the FCC-FAA-approved radios won't foul up the flight computer.

The ABC Radio Network has teamed up with the Harris Corporation to provide the service, using satellites and ground stations to beam dedicated FM broadcasts to these specific receivers kept on board the airplanes.

W5YI tnx The Readout

AMATEUR RADIO AUDIO SERVICE MARKS 1ST YEAR

"This Week in Amateur Radio", an Amateur Radio audio bulletin service, celebrates its first anniversary on March 5.

The show, offering news stories of interest to amateurs, lasts 60 to 90 minutes. It is carried on the Omega Radio Network on Saturdays, at 7:30 PM EST.

The program also is available on satellite Galaxy III, transponder 17 (9H), 5.8 MHz wide-band audio (4.040 GHz).

Weekly program summaries are circulated on amateur packet bulletin boards, FidoNet, GENie, USenet, and the Internet. The program is produced by Stephan Andersam, WA3RKB, and George Bowen, N2LQS.

For more information, contact Andersam at PO Box 8592, Albany NY 12208, or via amateur packet at WA2UMX.#ENY.NY.USA.NA.

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