



the RARRA RAG

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NO. 10

ANNUAL RaRa PICNIC JUNE 17TH, Noon to ?

NOTE: NEW LOCATION!

In order to enjoy more of the beauty of the Monroe County Parks system, the Board of Directors has selected the site for this years picnic to be at idyllic Ellison Park. You can find Ellison Park by taking the Blossom Road exit from RT 590 North. The exit is just north of the old can 'o worms. Blossom Road also intersects with Winton Road, in case you prefer not to take the expressway. Take Blossom Road to the East, away from downtown. Ellison Park has several entrances, please use the second entrance on the right (as you travel Eastward) for easy access to the picnic site. Once in the park, follow the signs to the South Lodge.

Ellison Park provides a lot of shade trees, a flowing stream, and plenty of places to re-fill water guns. It is common to see wild animals if you go for a quiet walk away from the lodge. Bring your baseball gloves, bats, and balls and we'll get a ball game going too.

Nourishment and soft drinks are provided by RaRa.

Anyone NOT bringing at least one legal minor MAY be subject to being assigned garbage detail!

RaRa QSL CARDS

by Lloyd R. Caves, WB2EFU

It was about 1984 when RaRa and the Rochester Chamber of Commerce went in together to buy QSL cards and post cards. The front of the cards had the skyline of Rochester, in color, made between electronic circuit boards. After more than ten years many of us have used up all of our QSL cards and have made inquiries into being able to get more. RaRa is out of cards and cannot help any one out at this time. However, the chamber does have a lot of the post cards left and is willing to sell them to us at a cost of \$25.00 per thousand. If you are interested in any of these please contact Lloyd Caves, WB2EFU at 647-4670 during the day or 671-7079 in the evening. Please do this before July

RaRa SUMMER MEETING

June 17th, 1995

12:00 P.M. - till?

Ellison Park

Blossom Road

SUMMER PICNIC

31, 1995 so arrangements can be made to buy the cards for you.

Remember that these are just post cards. You will have to take them to a printer and have your call put on them and a place for the QSO information on the back. Even with this additional cost, the price for these cards will run much less than they did in the early 1980's. Make sure to get your order in as we will only be making a one time purchase from the Chamber.

HAMFEST PROGRAMS

by Lloyd R. Caves, WB2EFU

It is hoped that everyone was able to make it to the Rochester Hamfest and enjoyed themselves. Among the many activities that were taking place at the hamfest were the many different programs and presentation on various topics. I would like to thank all of our speakers for volunteering and doing such a great job. Without people like you we would not be able to put on one of the best Hamfests around.

A large thank you has to go out to Bob Erskine, W2NVZ and the many people that helped him run the two way closed circuit TV programming from the conference room upstairs to the smaller room at the bottom of the stairs. This was done to accommodate disadvantaged people that may not have been able to make it up the stairs. This was made possible with the loan of commercial equipment from both TV channel 10, WHEC and channel 13, WOKR. Many thanks to you for your support.

the **RARA RAG**

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VIBROPLEX - OLD COMPANY, NEW OWNER

by Charlie Cotterman KA8OQF

When Samuel Morse tapped out that first historic four-word message, he had no idea what he'd feel like after pounding brass all day. Professional telegraphers were easy to spot a block away - the old hands had one normal arm and one the size of a telegraph pole. And the new "meat"? They usually had one arm that was totally useless after a long day - a tired and limp wrist and a cramped and knotted forearm were sure signs that traffic had been running hot and heavy all day. The "glass arm" was an occupational hazard.

In 1890, an inventor named Horace Martin decided to do something about this affliction. After years of work and several different models, he had a device worth patenting and manufacturing, and a company to do it with. In 1904, the device was named "The Bug". In 1906, the company was named Vibroplex.

Since those days, Vibroplex has moved around a bit. From its founding in Norcross, Georgia, it has moved to New York City to Portland, Maine, and now it's back down south in Mobile, Alabama. The new owner of Vibroplex moved the company back to his home area to be able to take a hands-on approach. Felton Mitchell indeed has a personal interest in the company; Mr. Mitchell is known in circles outside the business community as WA4OSR. For the first time, ham radio's oldest company has a ham owner.

"I've been a ham for 33 years. I have been associated with the electronics industry for quite a few years; I'm on the board of directors of QMS, which is a local NYSE electronics company and makes laser printers, and I'd always dreamed of having a little ham company. I heard a rumor that Vibroplex was for sale, investigated, and bought the company.

Vibroplex's only products are those devoted to telegraphy. With the advent of computers, modems, and other methods of instant communication, you'd think that there's no market for their products outside of the ham community. According to Mitch, though, that's not necessarily the case. "The vast majority of the Vibroplex keys are sold to amateurs all over the world..... believe it or not, there's still some third-world governments still buying bugs for their own internal use. It's kind of amazing in this day of satellite communications that the telegraph key still has a place." The company mainstay is still the good ol' Bug. According to Mitch, the basic design of the

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Amateur Radio News Service

Bug hasn't changed in 90 years. For those into electronic keying, there is the Vibrokeyer (similar in design and appearance to the Bug), the Iambic keyer, and the Brass Racer (which has a keyer circuit built into its brass base). Vibroplex is not resting on its laurels, though. Mitch realizes the need to change with the times (although he adamantly refuses to change the Bug). "The first new product we will be coming out with is a stand-alone electronic keyer, and it will be a modern microprocessor-based iambic keyer. The other product that we will be working on and hope to have available before the end of 1995 is a hand key. Vibroplex has never had a hand key in its history, and I've had numerous requests since I acquired the company for a hand key. So, that will be high up on the priority list, and the key will look like a Vibroplex." Amateur radio's oldest company indeed has a new owner, who intends to take the company into its second hundred years. "It's one of the very few old line ham companies that are still around..... but Vibroplex is still alive and looking to reach the 21 st century."

Tnx RF Carrier

June Calendar

17 - RaRa Picnic - Ellison Park - Blossom Road
See Article, page 1, for directions.

ATLANTIC DIVISION AWARDS

by Lloyd R. Caves, WB2EFU

Each year at the Rochester Hamfest there is an awards banquet. Three of the awards that are given at this banquet are the Amateur Of The Year, Grand 'Ole Ham and Technical Achievement Award. This years winners were Kenneth Botterbrodt, WA2CVJ, Amateur Of The Year; Donald Wagner, W2QFC, Grand 'Ole Ham; and Tim Duffy, K3LR, Technical Achievement Award (See news releases elsewhere in the Rag).

Every year however, there are a number of people that are nominated and are excellent candidates for these awards. This year the awards committee would like to give these people some recognition by letting everyone know who they are. Listed below in no special order are the other hams that had been nominated for awards:

Amateur Of The Year

Regina I Canfield, KB2AED
Barbara Rae Weirich, AA2CX

Grand 'Ole Ham

William M. Buchan, W20MV
Fred Carlton, WA2TUI
John Shaffer, W3SST
Frederick J. Skinner, K2DN
Lew Elicker, W3ADE
Earl John Foster, W3BKF

Congratulations to all of you that were nominated. After reading all the nominations you are very deserving of an award. It was difficult to choose this years winners.

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ARRL ATLANTIC DIVISION "AMATEUR OF THE YEAR" AWARD

by Kay Craigie, WT3P

The 1995 ARRL Atlantic Division "**Amateur of the Year**" is Kenneth Botterbrodt WA2CVJ, from Marlton, New Jersey. An active member of the South Jersey Radio Association, Ken also serves as ARRL Assistant Section Manager for Youth Activities for the Southern New Jersey Section.

Ken's enthusiastic presentations and hands-on demonstrations in schools have interested many youngsters in ham radio. After a brief talk from Ken about ham radio and its relation to geography, the kids are encouraged to get on 40 meters and 2 meters for QSOs. Ken has arranged television coverage for ham radio via the Lenape High School Television Network, a cable TV channel operated by the local school district.

In addition, Ken and his assistants put on many special event stations for community activities such as the Medford Apple Festival and the Chatsworth Cranberry Festival. The operators at these events are frequently young Amateurs, who do a good job of demonstrating and promoting Amateur Radio. He even helps Jaggard Elementary School in Marlton put on their own Field Day in early June, while classes are still in session. Some of Ken's youth projects are illustrated on page 12 of the April, 1995, issue of *QST*.

The award was presented at the ARRL Atlantic Division Convention, held in conjunction with the Rochester, NY, Hamfest on May 19, 1995. While at the convention to receive his award, Ken took the opportunity to pass his Extra class license examination!

ARRL ATLANTIC DIVISION "GRAND OLE HAM" AWARD

by Kay Craigie, WT3P

Recognizing lifetime service to Amateur Radio, the "**Grand Ole Ham**" award may be conferred upon Atlantic Division OMs and YLs who have been licensed at least 30 years or are at least 50 years of age. The 1995 "Grand Ole Ham" is Donald E. Wagner W2QFC, from East Aurora, New York.

Licensed at the age of 14, in 1934, Don took part in the 1935 ARRL Trans-Oceanic 80 meter tests and worked two European stations. Working Europe on 80 meters was an astonishing feat back then, especially for a teenage boy.

Over the years, Don has been active with several radio clubs; most recently, he has helped promote the growth of the Pioneer Radio Operators Society and has served that club as president and vice president.

As a member of the Army Signal Corps, Don took part in the 1944 D-Day invasion of Normandy at Utah Beach. A few years ago, he helped found the Association of D-Day Utah Beach Radio Amateurs, which has an ongoing relationship with French hams in Normandy.

Don is a published author of ham radio articles, a respected Elmer, and a life member of the Niagara Frontier Chapter of QCWA.

The award was announced at the Atlantic Division Convention, held in conjunction with the Rochester, NY, Hamfest on May 19, 1995.

ARRL ATLANTIC DIVISION "TECHNICAL ACHIEVEMENT" AWARD

by Kay Craigie

The 1995 Atlantic Division "**Technical Achievement**" award has been presented to Tim Duffy K3LR, from West Middlesex, Pennsylvania. This award recognizes outstanding technical accomplishments in any field of Amateur Radio.

President of the Mercer County Amateur Radio Club and active with the North Coast Contesters radio club, Tim currently serves the Atlantic Division as representative on the ARRL Contest Advisory Committee. He moderates the antenna forum at Dayton and was formerly the moderator of the contest forum at the Hamvention®.

Tim designed and maintains the K3LR contest station, a center for multi-multi contest efforts each year. He has published technical articles and frequently gives speeches on RFI, antennas, and contesting. Tim has often helped other hams solve their technical problems, from RFI to equipment and tower difficulties.

Licensed since age 12, Tim is now 36 years old and employed as RF engineering manager at Wilcom Cellular in Youngstown, Ohio. He is also president of LTA Industries, making antennas for commercial and amateur users and publishing the NA contest logging software. Tim and his wife expect their first child later this year.

The award was conferred at the Division Convention, held in conjunction with the Rochester, NY, Hamfest on May 19, 1995.

TOP 10 SIGNS DXING ISN'T FOR YOU

AA6ZG, Leon Fletcher

10. The post office returns your out-going QSL cards in an unmarked paper bag.
9. Every time you hear a pile-up you turn your rig off.
8. You hear an HZ call CQ but you don't respond because it's time for you to watch the *Mary Tyler Moore Show*.
7. You work a T5 and ask how to get a card from him and he says,, "Im good in the call book," and you say, "What's a call book?"
6. You installed a new rotor for your 20 meter beam and now your antenna points either straight down at your backyard or straight up at the North Star.
5. In the mail you receive a postcard from the QSL bureau saying it doesn't have your address.
4. You hear a VK station calling and you ask him if he speaks English..
3. Last month you bought a new all-transistor rig and now you're trying to find a place to plug in an 807 tube.
2. You work an XE station and, when he asks for a QSL card, you ask, "What's a QSL card?"
1. You work for an hour to get on a list to work a VE3 station..

From October, 1994 Downlink, Newsletter of the San Lorenzo Valley Repeater Club via Spurious Emissions



The RaRa Rag Years Ago

by Ed Gable K2MP

20 YEARS AGO - JUNE 1975: With it's usual flair, RaRa took on the task of providing radio communications for the Sister Cities International Conference held in Rochester. Both PR activity and communications with various sister cities was accomplished. Heading up the task was Ron Jakubowski, W2HXP. The FCC issued a special call for this event, WH2SCI, and the station was located in the lobby of the downtown Hotel. Joan Vogt, WA2YTK. Chairperson of "Fun and Games" for the June RaRa Picnic proudly announced a mini golf tournament to be held at the picnic area in Powder Mill Park. Some may remember the games starting right on time, only to have the participants arrested by the Monroe County Sheriff for illegally playing golf in the park. Nice job, Joan. A long time advertiser remained Wally Kincaid, WB2HZG, of Allied TV & Radio.

40 YEARS AGO - JUNE 1955: Picnics were still in the news as RaRa met for a sausage roast at the home of Bruce Kelley, W2ICE, in North Chili. Visitors to Bruce's shack were known to comment about the Kelley Kilowatt; "Gee, isn't that final tube awful big ?" Field Day planning was complete and this issue detailed how to find the spot on top of South Hill, including instructions to put the gate back in place for fears the cows might get out. Hamfest Chairman Fred Halik, W2PFI, reported that the committee mailed out 2000 Hamfest flyers. 476 people attended the Awards Banquet featuring an actual speaker from the ARRL. 51 operators of the Rochester Emergency Net and CD participated in a local, county and state-wide communications test, according to Alternate Radio Officer Linc Cundall, W2QY. In their advertisement, Hi-C Electronics on State Street promised RaRa members courteous service.

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HAMFEST MEMORIES



The "GRAND OLE HAM" award is presented to Donald E. Wagner, W2QFC, at the Atlantic Division Convention awards banquet held by the Rochester Hamfest on May 19, 1995



Kenneth Botterbrodt, WA2CVJ, receives the Amateur of the Year award from Hugh Turnbull.



ARRL representative Hugh Turnbull, W3ABC, presents the ARRL Atlantic Division "Technical Achievement" Award to Tim Duffy, K3LR, from Middlesex, Pennsylvania. The award was presented at the Atlantic Division Convention held in conjunction with the Rochester Hamfest.

IMPROVING STATION PROTECTION

Ground measurement - Since most soils are stratified, the best way to determine the effectiveness of the ground system is measure it. The simplest way to determine the sub-layer conductivity is to measure the first ground rod, one foot at a time, as you drive it into the ground. This technique can provide a profile of the lower layers of earth, as compared to the first foot.

Most earth resistance meters measure only dc or low frequency ac resistance of the ground system. Since a lightning strike energy is predominately RF energy, the inductance of the ground system is important.

If the soil at the grounding location is not very conductive, three things can be done to help the situation. First, increase the surface area of the conductor which will decrease its normal inductance. Second, dope the soil to increase its conductivity and thus help to shunt the inductance of the ground bare conductors. Third, install additional bare radial lines with ground rods which will effectively parallel the inductance and reduce the overall ground system inductance.

The most effective material to use for your grounding system is copper. Pound for pound and dollar for dollar, copper is the best conductor of electricity, and will last a lifetime. The larger the area in square inches, of course the more grounding capability of our system. The standard is to drive copper rod, or copper clad rod 8 feet into the ground - and done in multiples just enhances the system.

Soil Doping - Water in its purest form is an insulator. By this I mean, enough water separating two given conductors, can act as an insulator. Also the mineral properties of the water, will effect the current carrying capabilities. Ionic salts when mixed with water make ions. The earth is a conductor because of the number of ionic -salts present in the soil. Therefore, conductivity can be increased by adding more ions to the soil.. Soil doping can be done by either adding more water or a saline solution. Simple salt or a salt solution added to the ground, will improve your grounding system. If the soil already has a sufficient amount of naturally occurring salt, adding water will free the extras ions. If few ions are available, salts such as Epsom salts, can be added to the soil to increase conductivity. Table salt or rock salt can be used to increase the salinity, but may effect the plant life in adjacent areas.

Adding ground radials maybe the most cost effective grounding technique to consider when looking at the impedance, material cost, and installation labor. Radials do have a limit on their effective length. If the surge energy has not been launched into the soil within the first 75 feet, the inductance of the radial will prevent any further effective propagation, therefore, as a general rule of thumb, all radials should be at least 50 feet long and no longer than 75 feet.

Ground rods should be placed along the entire length of the radial. The effective spacing between rods for normal grassy areas is two times the length of the ground rod itself. If an 8 foot ground rods is used, they should be placed on 16 foot centers. And maybe placed closer in dry earth conditions.

N2MYM - Ed Busch

Thanks The LARA Spectrum via Spurious Emissions

BRIEFS

•CQ Magazine has joined Yaesu USA as a corporate underwriter of the *Amateur Radio Newslite* 1995 "Young Ham of the Year Award." Yaesu has been the sole corporate underwriter of the Young Ham of the Year Award program since its inception. Nominations are open until June 30, 1995 (applications from 28197 Robin Ave, Saugus, California 91350).

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Right on Canning Pkwy to Ramsey Building*

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