



# the RARRA RAG

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NO. 5

## NG2P TO DISCUSS PACKET CLUSTER AT JANUARY MEETING

Greetings to all. Hope you all had a great holiday season these past few weeks. With the holidays behind us, it is now time to look foreword to a new year and all it will bring. Our next meeting will take place January 3, at 111 Westfall Road in the auditorium. This month, Bob Hunter, NG2P will discuss and demonstrate the packet cluster that many of us use almost daily.

Packet has become a very important mode of amateur radio over the last few years. Almost every ham now has a computer in their shack and it's primary use is usually for packet radio. There are many packet clusters around the country for HF ers' to spot DX and inform one another of propagation's. Bob, NG2P operates the local cluster and I think we all owe him a debt of gratitude for his efforts. This is a great responsibility for anyone to undertake and I think Bob has done an outstanding job.

Even if you don't have packet radio, this demonstration could be very informative and may even influence you to get started. There are many ways to get your feet wet. I, myself got started by picking up a RAPS modem and set it up with an old 286 PC I had acquired just for that purpose. This is a very inexpensive way to get started. For further advice on where and how to contact someone at RAPS, Jack Tripp, N2SNL might be able to help.

*Continued on page 2*

## SILENT KEYS

**Joseph C. Meyers**  
KB2EQP  
November 15, 1996

**Robert J. Young**  
W2RTB  
December 11, 1996

## RaRa MEETING

January 3, 1997

8:00 P.M.

**Monroe County Office Building**  
**111 Westfall Road**

*Packet Cluster*

## RaRa Amateur Radio License Testing

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**Saturday January 18, 1997**

**Registration - 8:30AM**

**Testing - 9:00AM**

**Social Services Building**  
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## VE TESTING

Join us on Saturday, January 18, 1997 at 111 Westfall Road for new license or to upgrade. Registration starts at 8:30AM. Exams start at 9:00AM.

# the **RaRa Rag**

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However, if you want to get fancy, a TNC may be the way to go. There are many of them available and some do much more than just packet. ( Slow scan TV for one! ) Bob's packet cluster has a number of uses and I am sure that all will be explained to us at the January meeting. Once again, don't forget that January's meeting is at 111 Westfall Rd. and not at our usual location. I hope to see you all there. A happy and safe new year to you.

*George F. Lloyd, N2UIO RaRa Vice President*

## Greetings from the president;

Last month I successfully procrastinated to the point where there was no time to write a message for the rag. With a little luck that can be changed this month. Was pleased to see the turnout last month for the presentation on satellite communications and wish to thank Walter, and George for the time and effort they put into the presentation. It was well received by all and now maybe more members will get involved. It was mentioned that the cost of satellites is significant and the people who put them up should be compensated in some way by the users of the system. It was also mentioned that we are in a position to lose a part of the spectrum the satellites operate in. Commercial interests may be in a position to purchase these frequencies by the auction. The ARRL is the foremost player in standing up for our interests in this domain. If you are not a member, you might consider joining and maybe even making a donation to the body of the ARRL that is presenting our case to the legislators that are in the position to approve or disprove the auction or our presently affected slice of the spectrum. The BOARD will be taking up the subject of making a donation to ARRL to help in the fight against the auction of what we now know as 2 meters and some of the higher bands that the LEO's are trying to get for commercial purposes. Those of you who remember way back when frequencies above 200 meters (1500kc) were considered to be useless will readily recognize the role that amateur radio has played in the exploration of the shorter wavelengths. Now commercial radio feels the need to take over some of what have traditionally been our bands. If we do not have the will to fight for what has been historically been ours, then we deserve to lose them. So it is largely up to us as amateurs to help preserve our amateur bands as much as possible. If a donation to the cause will help then by all means I urge you to get into the act.

# CALL SIGN SNAFU AT FCC AFFECTS NEW HAMS

Imagine you've just passed your licensing examination and your new ticket finally arrives in the mail bearing your brand-new call sign. Maybe you even order a batch of new QSL cards. Then, you get on the air only to learn that your brand-new call sign isn't your call sign after all, because the FCC already had issued it to someone else!

In fact, in some cases during mid to late October, the FCC's computers apparently issued the same call sign to several individuals at different times. In a way, it's been a game of musical chairs, but one where the last person to be assigned the call sign gets to keep it. Among those affected were Louise Williams, KF4MTE, and John Lake, KF4MTC, both of Newberry, South Carolina, and George Merchant, KF4MTD, of Joanna, South Carolina. Williams first was issued KF4MTO. A check of the FCC transaction records indicates that KF4MTO was a busy call sign, having first been assigned Williams on October 23, then reassigned on October 30 to another YL in North Carolina before ending up with its "rightful" owner, yet another YL in Tennessee on November 2. Williams was issued KF4MTE on the same date, but not before the call sign had briefly been assigned first to different individuals in Florida, also on October 23 and October 30, respectively. Lake's and Merchant's call signs had similar histories, and they, in turn, had first received other call signs on their new licenses.

The FCC discovered the problem in late October. Commission personnel were wrestling with computer-related problems for about a week during late October and early November, just prior to issuing the first Gate 2 vanity call signs on November 4. All of those affected appear to be first-time licensees.

"The incorrect licenses were not supposed to be mailed out, but somehow, they were mailed out," said a spokesman at the FCC's Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, office. He said he had "no idea" how many licensees were affected, but he believes the FCC's current database has been corrected so that no call sign has multiple holders. But some people affected might not have gotten the word yet. "The correct licenses might not have been mailed out, so they might be holding a license with the wrong call sign," he conceded. "We're going to try and see which ones didn't get mailed out." He emphasized that the call sign in the current FCC database is the correct call sign. Gettysburg personnel were looking into the reasons for the irregularity with an eye toward making sure it doesn't happen again, he said.

*Tnx ARRL Letter*

# January Calendar

- 3 - RaRa Meeting - 8:00PM - 111 Westfall Road  
Monroe County Office Building Auditorium
- 18- RaRa VE Testing - 111 Westfall Rd. 8:30 AM
- 21 - RDXA Meeting - 111 Westfall Rd., 7:30PM

**NOTE NEW MEETING PLACE  
FOR THIS MONTH ONLY!!!  
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FIRST FLOOR AUDITORIUM**

# W1AW RECEIVES EQUIPMENT DONATIONS FROM MANUFACTURERS

Timewave was among the ham radio manufacturers recently donating equipment to the ARRL Maxim Memorial Station, W1AW. Timewave's Al Caplan, W0RIC, showed up in person to donate a DSP-59Y plug-in DSP module, designed to be installed in a Yaesu speaker cabinet. W1AW also has recently received equipment donations from Alinco (a DX-70TH HF/6-meter transceiver, a DR-605T VHF/UHF FM mobile transceiver, and an EMS-14 desk mike); Yaesu (a G-5400B az/el satellite antenna rotator, for an installation going up next spring); and L. L. Grace (a Kansas City Tracker with Doppler shift tuning option). W1AW Station Manager Joe Carcia, NJ1Q, expressed "deepest appreciation" to all of the manufacturers who have donated equipment to W1AW. (The ARRL is a tax-exempt, not-for-profit organization as described in Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Voluntary donations are tax-deductible to the extent provided by law.)

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# 1997 ROCHESTER HAMFEST PROGRAMS

by Lloyd R. Caves, WB2EFU

Think spring, sunshine, and warm weather!! !! Don't these conditions make you think of going to the hamfests in the area? Remember that Rochester has the largest one in the area and it is coordinated by *RaRa* through the Rochester Hamfest Committee. You won't want to miss this one so mark your calendars now for May 30, 31, and June 1. While you are marking things down it is a good time to start your wish list of things to look at or buy while attending the hamfest.

As long as you are marking things down why not start a list of the programs held each year at that you would like to attend. Over the next few issues of the *RaRa Rag* you will find out what programs will be held at the Dome Arena this year. The May issue will have the times listed for each program so you will be able to schedule your time accordingly.

First of all with January 1st behind us and the new RF law in affect it would be good idea to understand what this means to you as an amateur. Ed Hare, KA1CV of the ARRL Laboratory Staff will be explaining what this law is intending to do and what we have to do to be in compliance. Do we need a lot of fancy testing equipment? Do we do nothing? Or is there some ground in between that is easy for everyone to deal with? Come and find out, it is our future.

I don't know about you but I get confused easily. This is done daily as I watch the weather on different TV stations. There is weather radar, Doppler radar, and super Doppler radar. Everyone claims that with their system they can give you the best weather forecast and pin point storms in your back yard. Is this true or a myth. Judy Levan, N2TEZ of the national weather service will be with us to explain what Doppler radar can and can't do. I think that there may be some surprises for everyone on this subject.

As in past years there will be a Joint MARS Forum. This is a program that is for anyone that is a MARS member or for those of us that just want more information about MARS. This forum will be lead by Colin Corke, AFF1NY, Air Force MARS State Director; Ken Wasley, NNN0GBJ-15, Navy-Marine Corps. MARS; and Elizabeth (Betty) Strattan, AAA2NY, Army MARS State Director.

After the complete forum the Navy-Marine MARS will also have an annual update. This will be presented by Ed Kessler, NNN0GBJ, Northern New York Area Coordinator.

Are you trying to achieve DXCC or reach another endorsement level? Well if you are, save your cards as this year for the first time you will be able to have them checked at the Rochester Hamfest. Bill Kennamer, K5FUV, DXCC Chairman for the ARRL will be in attendance and spending a lot of time during the hamfest checking cards for you. He will be in a booth on the Dome floor most of the day.

This is just a start of the programs that will be available for you this year. I hope that you enjoy them and the hamfest. By the way the hamfest will be open on Friday afternoon this year also. Not just the flea market but the commercial exhibitors as well. See you there.

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## LEAGUE "HEARTILY SUPPORTS" FCC PROPOSAL TO EASE INTERNATIONAL OPERATING

In comments filed in response to an FCC proposal that would make it easier for visiting foreign hams to temporarily operate in the US, the ARRL said it "heartily supports" the plan, but suggested some changes. Earlier this year, the FCC proposed amending the Amateur Radio rules to make it easier for hams holding a European Conference of Postal and Telecommunications Administrations (CEPT) radio-amateur license or an International Amateur Radio Permit (IARP) from certain countries in the Americas to operate during short visits to the US.

If finally approved, hams would be able to operate for short periods in participating countries without first obtaining another license or permit from the host country. The arrangement would make it easier for US hams to operate stations temporarily in several countries in Europe, Central and South America. Likewise, hams from those countries would be allowed to operate stations in places where the FCC regulates ham radio.

The principal change recommended by the ARRL involved the length of time CEPT or IARP holders would be allowed to operate in the US. The FCC had proposed extending operating authority for "up to 180 days within the preceding five years [sic]." In its comments, the League called the limitation "unnecessarily restrictive," and suggested a CEPT license or an IARP "be valid for use by the holder for a period up to one year" from the date of arrival in the US but not beyond the expiration date of the ham license issued by the visitor's home country.

The two classes of CEPT licenses would correspond either to Amateur Extra or Technician class. Resident aliens or US citizens could not operate in the US under a CEPT license or IARP.

In 1995, the ARRL petitioned the FCC to implement the CITEL/Amateur Convention. The League also asked the Commission to acknowledge arrangements to be made between the ARRL and the Department of State to issue IARP documents to US citizens for use in other CITEL countries. The FCC also has asked the State Department to apply for participation in the CEPT Agreement as a non-CEPT country.

*Tnx ARRL Letter*

## WRC-99 COMMITTEE SUPPORTS MORSE CODE TREATY REQUIREMENT FOR HF

The special committee created by the ARRL to study issues relating to the 1999 World Radiocommunication Conference (WRC-99) has recommended that the ARRL Board of Directors not support changing the treaty requirement for Morse code testing to operate below 30 MHz. The committee submitted its final report to the ARRL Board this week.

The committee report contains recommended ARRL positions regarding possible changes in Article S25 of the international radio regulations. Consistent with the results of a survey of ARRL members, the committee recommended no change in the existing treaty obligation that administrations test prospective amateur licensees on their Morse code ability before authorizing them to operate below 30 MHz. The committee did support changes to Article S25 that would:

- \* Eliminate the so-called "banned countries" list.
- \* Establish that providing communications in the event of natural disasters is a normal and desirable part of the international service provided by radio amateurs.
- \* Reduce restrictions on international communications on behalf of third parties.
- \* Aid in the establishment of an "International Amateur Permit."

The committee report also responded to the Board's request that it study possible changes to the amateur licensing structure in the United States. The committee offered some proposals for change, but recommended that the Board take no action on this part of its report until the committee's proposals are shared with the membership and there is an opportunity for member comment.

The Board will consider the committee's report and recommendations at its next regular meeting, January 17-18, 1997. If the Board accepts the report, it will be available for public release. An article giving the results of the survey will appear in February 1997 QST.

*Tnx ARRL Letter*

# CW AND TECHNOLOGY

by Art De Bruycker, W2YGW

The CW mode has little intrinsic to it that mandates its preservation. Sure, we all know about its frugality of bandwidth, its ability to get through in bad conditions, and the way it allows hams who do not share a common language to communicate. Bur CW is old. And in this society, being old is the kiss of death.

When I learned Morse as a boy, it was a mark of distinction. Years later, when I became a ham, I found that I still remembered it. By this time I had a hearing problem. I soon discovered that CW is easier to understand than speech- a reason for preference unique to the aged.

Some demean CW precisely because they associate it with the old operators. To the scoffers, loyalty seems akin to stubborn espousal of outdated views. C. S. Elliot termed this denigration of things old "chronological snobbery".

Others say CW ought to be done away with simply because technology has superseded it. The guiding principles here seem to be that more complex is better, and that eliminating the human element is the aim of technical perfection.

Today's radios have advanced beyond our ability to repair (indeed, for some of us, even to see clearly). One result is that homebrewing has largely become a province of the underdeveloped countries.

Bur when it pares away human participation, a technological marvel often produces sheer boredom. For me, CW offers beauty, rhythm, and economy of expression: it is language stripped to its essentials.

Wordiness is left to keyboard ops and those courtly hams whose courtesies occupy the greater parts of their QSO's. But that's okay: I'd rather listen to them than to the cops in an SSB Dx pileup. (On CW, even the obscenities acquire abbreviations.)

An image excites me still. An operator shrouded in a blanket hunches over his key at local midnight, straining to hear a faint signal from some far corner of the world, where the very stars look different.

I'll not disparage other modes. I only want to suggest that those who must judge, judge CW by standards other than efficiency or modernity. Those who operate CW do so because they enjoy it. In a Hobby, isn't that enough? Many of them aren't old. I believe the people attracted to CW today are the same sort that found it fascinating 75 years ago. But a person must be exposed to a bug to get bitten. That's why live demonstrations at county fairs, Boy

Scout jamborees, science museums, and schools are so important. Does your club do that? (joyfully copied from an article appearing in ARNS, Sept. 1995. Written by Jim O'keefe, WE6V, and in turn was presented in March '95 NW Ohio chapter, Ken Wright, W8NOT editor. Fully agreed with by your president of the year W2YGW)

## CURRENT FCC FORM 610 IS STILL GOOD

Unlike the expiration dates on perishable food items in the grocery store, the expiration dates on the FCC Form 610 can be safely ignored. A lot of hams have asked about them, however, because an "expiration date" of August 31, 1996, appears in the upper right hand corner of current FCC Forms 610 that were issued in November 1993 and in March 1995 (as shown in the lower righthand corner).

ARRL/VEC Manager Bart Jahnke, KB9NM, says the August 31, 1996, expiration date is an internal FCC reference date only, and it is not a date to instruct the public when to stop using the form.

The FCC says the November 1993 and March 1995-issued FCC Forms 610 are okay to use and will continue to be acceptable for use until further notice.

*Tnx ARRL Letter*

## SOLAR ACTIVITY REBOUNDS

Solar seer Tad Cook, KT7H, in Seattle, Washington reports: Solar activity is up. Average sunspot numbers were 13 points above the average for the previous week, and solar flux averaged about 3 points higher. Could this signal the upturn in activity we have been waiting for? Solar flux should drift downward to around 70 over the next few days and remain there until after the first week in December, when it should crawl up to the mid-70s again. No stormy periods are forecast over the next 30 days, but, of course, this is based on previous solar rotations, and cannot predict any new coronal holes on the Sun.

*tnx ARRL LETTER*

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# THOUGHTS FROM K2KWK

The generous comments of Alex, NV2Y, in his nomination of me as the Grand Old Ham of the Atlantic ARRL Division for 1996 deserve my thanks. I am very honored to be so recognized. Providing live bulletin programs is my personal contribution to amateur radio in WNY. My family and I truly appreciate the support of this award and the thought that goes with it. Thank you.

The weekly bulletin services from my station reach you through the cooperation and support of several other interested hams. I get bulletins from the Kodak Park ARC and the DXCluster of NG2P - thanks to the weekly posting efforts of Fred Gern -KB2SE and George Masny -KA2GPJ. If it wasn't for the talents and efforts of many unnamed hams in building and maintaining repeaters, bulletins could never reach as far and wide.

How did I get into doing voice bulletins? In the early 1970's bulletins in the Rochester area were voiced weekly on two-meter repeaters by Gary Arnold, WB2WPA. Then his career took him out of town and left a noticeable lack of facts and equal increase in rumors. About that time I wanted to get over my "code hump" at 15 words per minute. I started taking the daily WIAW bulletins at 18 wpm, and I also caught the daily code practice at 20 wpm. After about 45 days of this, once a day, the hump" was gone and code became another language skill.

I realized that others in the area would like to have bulletin information too. Early encouragement came from several people including Rick Booth, K2SA, Ron Jakubowski, K2RJ, Jim Collinsworth, N2JC, and Paul Di Lorenzo, WB2IMT. I started out reading bulletins on-the-air for the Sunday night FM nets when many hams would be tuned to the local repeaters. A later expansion was made, adding Tuesday nights and, with work provided by Dave Petrie, N2CEH, using linked repeaters throughout the southern tier.

Sometimes bulletins are supplemented in further depth with information from the "ARRL Letter". Other news stories affecting ham radio from other sources get included from time to time. Radio classes and exam sessions in the WNY Section are noted, and the "Hamfest Social Calendar" is always popular. Local information is provided by local sources. So if you want something covered in the bulletins, please send it to me.

Reporting about ham radio over the last twenty years has seldom been a dull task. I encourage you to think about what you can do for amateur radio. A bulletin program can bring a sense of community to your area. There is much more room in WNY for

other bulletin stations and relay stations. Each of us has something unique to contribute. Or, you could relay bulletins to another repeater. Either way -please let me know and we can discuss you being an ARRL Official Bulletin Station.

Note: Weekly bulletins from K2KWK are available as follows:

Sunday @ 8:45pm as part of the Monroe County FM Net and the Newline Report from WA2MYG that begins at 8:30pm. The repeater for the three features changes, alternating weekly - appearing on the 146.88 repeater of the RRRRA one Sunday then moving to the 146.79 repeater of the GRA for the next Sunday -and rotating back to 146.88 the following week. The .88 repeater announces each Sunday afternoon in its "id" routine where the net will be that night. When the "Net" is on the 146.88 repeater, it's linked to the megaplex of Bob Shewell, N2HJD and bulletins also appear on 53.33, 146.925, 224.58, 442.8, 444.7 mHz.

TUESDAY @ 8:15pm as following the Newline Report from WA2MYG (starts @ 8:00pm) appearing on the NU2U/NR2M repeater on Quail Hill (totally wind powered) on 224.46, 146.88 WA2AAC repeater of the RRRRA, and the WA2JRR repeater at Attica, NY on 145.31. Newline appears on the WA2JRR repeater by the relay services of Reed Gleichman, N2KZF. Bulletins are also relayed to part of the Buffalo Amateur Radio Repeater Assoc. by Mike Rink, WB2HYP, appearing on 146.655 in Rochester and 146.91 South of Buffalo and 442.00 in the Niagara peninsula area.

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## HAVE A NEW CALLSIGN?

Those of you that have acquired new callsigns should contact RaRa by calling the RaRa hotline at 442-0587 so your correct callsign will be listed in the RaRa Directory. Don't hesitate, call now. The directory will be printed shortly

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# ARRL MEMBERSHIP IS AT AN ALL-TIME HIGH

Good news as the 1996 ARRL National Convention gets under way in Peoria, Illinois, this weekend: ARRL membership hit an all-time record of 173,491 members in August. The previous all-time high of 172,752 was reached in March 1995, just before a small dues increase took effect that caused a slight decline.

Especially over the past two months, radio amateurs have been joining the ARRL in large

numbers to express their support for the League's efforts to defend Amateur Radio frequency allocations against commercial encroachment. In a typical month, about 1500 people join the ARRL for the first time. During July and August 1996, the figures were 2461 and 1988 respectively.

ARRL Executive Vice President David Sumner, K1ZZ, was encouraged by the membership trend and hopes it will continue. "In this uncertain period, when more and more of the radio spectrum is being offered to the highest bidder, amateurs recognize that we have to stick together. The ARRL is the best glue we have," he commented.

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