



# the **RARA RAG**

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April 1998

NO. 8

## The ARRL Lab and Product Review Process

by Rick Wells

Everyone who has contemplated the purchase of a new rig or station accessory has no doubt done some research regarding the features, functions and benefits of the proposed equipment. Most, if not all of us, have turned to the pages of QST Magazine to read the Product Review column as well as to simply peruse the various advertisements. Once again, here's another benefit to joining and supporting the ARRL.

At this month's program we're going to learn about the operations of the ARRL Lab and how the equipment review process happens. Rus Healy, NJ2L, will be our presenter. Rus is a former Senior Assistant Technical Editor for QST and was in charge of the Product Review Program. Rus is going to cover several Lab topics such as how advertising is accepted, the delivery of technical assistance and evaluating technical materials. Regarding the equipment review program, he'll be discussing how products are selected, ordered, tested and finally, how the review is prepared prior to publication in QST.

In addition to the above duties, Rus also wrote technical articles for CIST, C215X, NCJ and various other ARRL publications. He was the Associate Editor of the 15th edition of The ARRL Antenna Book. Rus currently works at Microwave Data Systems here in Rochester.

Please join us for an exciting and informative presentation at the usual time and place, 8 PM on Friday April 3rd at the Henrietta fire hall.

## Rochester Hamfest

### May 29 - 31, 1998

## **RaRa MEETING**

**APRIL 3, 1998**

**8:00 P.M.**

Henrietta Fire Hall

3129 East Henrietta Road

The ARRL Lab and Product Review Process

## **RaRa Hotline**

**(716) 442-0587**

24 hours a day

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NC2N

February 23, 1998

**Paul Modern**

K2GWT

February 23, 1998

**Herbert C. Loeffler**

W2RNZ

February 25, 1998

**Gary E. Hans**

WA2SMI

March 11, 1997

(not previously reported)

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## 1998 Hamfest Programs-

### Part IV

by Lloyd R. Caves, WB2EFU

April showers will bring May flowers and a warm and sunny Rochester Hamfest and Atlantic Division Conference. Remember that this is the largest Hamfest in the area and once again this year it will be running on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. The dates will be May 29, 30, and 31. Make sure your calendar is marked, as you wouldn't want to miss this year's convention. With the added hours on Friday to visit the flea market and commercial exhibitors you will have extra time to attend the programs that will be held in the Dome. These are a great way to learn something new as well as what may be going on around you. Below, as in the previous three months, is a list and brief description of some of the programs to be held.

Last month there was a program listed that was called **APRS For Beginners**. This is a good way to learn what APRS is and how it works. But if you are one of the few folks with a GPS unit and are now involved in APRS then **Advance APRS** may be just what you are looking for. Keith Sproul, WUZZ will present this program to you. Keith is one of the real experts in this area and will bring a lot of information on APRS mapping to this program. Learn from him and get into this new field in Amateur Radio.

The Rochester VHF Group will present the **VHF Jr. Academy** which will be hosted by Evhen Tupis, K2IV, Rochester VHF Group Chairman. This years VHF Forum will feature a scaled-down version of the highly-acclaimed VHF Groupers' event called **VHF Academy**. Come learn about aspects of VHF and Microwave communications you may have not considered before, like: "Building Blocks of a 10-Ghz WBFM station", "Principles of Pointing a LASER beam", and "Receiver Performance; Understanding & Beating the Noise". This will be the eighth year of our highly regarded seminar and one that you won't want to miss.

Amateur Radio does not have to be an expensive hobby. Dan Miller, K3UFG, Educational Activities Correspondent with ARRL will prove this in his topic **Setting up a New Ham Station**. Let Dan dispel this myth for you and show you how to set up an inexpensive station to operate.

Once again this year Kevin T. Kedzierski, WA2FKV, Special Event Coordinator for the Radio Association of WNY will be giving the **W2 "RUF and Ready" Code Proficiency Tests**. These tests will be taking place all day long on the Dome floor. A certificate (seen elsewhere in this issue of the RAG) will be given to those participants who copy

at least one perfect minute at 7.5 WPM. There will be endorsements for levels from 10 WPM to 75 WPM in jumps of 5 WPM.

Next month will be a schedule of all the programs and the conference rooms that they will be held in. This year we are going to have more programs taking place on the second floor at the Dome as we now have a second conference room upstairs. This will give us a much better area to present the programs. This room is located across the hall from the one we have used in the past years and will be called Room B.

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## **Girl Scouts of the Genesee Valley Earn Amateur Radio Badge**

Rochester, NY - March 7, 1998

Three hundred twenty four Junior Girl Scouts, aged 8 to 12, crowded into the auditorium at Strong Museum in groups of sixty or so girls and their leaders. Keith Freeberg, N2BEL; Marsha Lehman, N2KNT; Robert Moore, N2USB; Mary Remenicky, KB2WSD; and Suzanne Wyatt, KB2LZV presented the elements for their Ham Radio Merit Badge in half hour tutorials.

Each presenter used a computer-generated presentation to hold the interest of the group. Although, everyone seemed to like the animation and sounds in the presentation, the highlight was the question and answer period. Each member of the instruction team "Hammed" it up by spreading out in the audience and having the scouts ask their question via amateur radio.

Questions ranged from, "Why would I want to become a ham radio operator?" to "Can you talk to the police on those radios?" (Pointing to the handhelds) to "How far away have you talked?" to "What made you want to become a Ham?" As you can see, there were sometimes more questions than we had time to answer before it was time to clear the auditorium for the next group. How would you answer those questions? (I'm always looking for good answers -- I have plenty of good questions.)

I'd like to thank Lorena Garmezy, Strong Museum Education Coordinator for inviting RaRa to talk to the Girl Scouts and John Green, Strong Museum A/V, for helping us patch out 2 meter audio into the auditorium sound system. Of course, I owe a debt of thanks to the three people who coordinated getting the various groups into and out of the auditorium and helping us place our lunch order at the 1950s style diner inside Strong Museum, the Skyliner. Skyliner . . . that's a name that is just perfect for ham radio.

Word is there still a great deal of interest from the Junior Girl Scouts in pursuing more in the communication merit badge category of which ham

radio is a part. Ms. Garmezy has indicated she would like to invite us back when the next group is ready.

I could see from the reaction of the audience, the Girl Scouts appreciated having accomplished role models, Marsha (N2KNT) Mary (KB2WSD) and Sue (KB2LZV) as presenters. That means I'll be looking for even more role models for next time. So . . . Ladies, get ready to be asked to become a presenter at the next Amateur Radio Badge session. Help more young women become part of the proud tradition of caring, service and experimentation you have exemplified.

My hat is off to all the Strong Museum Staff for their fine treatment and great courtesy. Most especially, my thanks go out to our fine presenters who made it all sound so interesting and informative. Special thanks to Paul Ertsgaard, KE2AZ, for bring in his 1936 -1937 vintage home built transmitter and receiver (used to contact the South Pole) and Greg Knope, N2XAJ, for lending the use of two 2 meter handhelds to the cause.

*73, N2BEL*

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FOR SALE: HF antenna system: 40' crank up tower, Hi-Gain TH3 Mk3 tri-band yagi, Ham II Rotator. All excellent. You take down in Greece (Easy) . Priced to sell at \$300.00. Also Kenwood TS-940S/AT, very good full featured HF transceiver at an even better price; \$900.00. Call Ed Gable, K2MP, 392-3088 or e-mail k2mp@eznet.net

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## **RaRa Amateur Radio License Testing**

**Novice - Tech - Tech Plus  
General - Advanced - Extra  
or  
Whatever Elements you need  
to complete a license class.**

**Saturday April 18, 1998  
Registration - 8:30AM  
Testing - 9:00AM**

**Social Services Building  
111 Westfall Rd., Rochester  
Inquires (716) 334-4488**

# Contest Season 1997-98

de K2CS

It seems years ago that we started the 1997-98 contest season. I'm sure Raymond and a new job helped to distance myself from last October.

Operating 100 watts and wire presents a unique challenge at either end of the solar cycle. At it's lowest point, it's tuff to break the pileups and at it's highest, *which I have yet to experience*, so many "new" ones are out there I won't know what to do! Some of the later feelings were had during CQWW CW in October.

**CQWW SSB** bands seemed great. Nice to have the "additional" band to add to almost 1/2 million points. 10 meters was finally "open". I worked 138 of my 540 q's there. Europe made an appearance here for a short while on Sunday with EA's and F's while Africa was strong both days. ZS, 3DA, 9J and 9X all made the log on 10 meters. 20 & 15 were also strong but 40 & 80 seemed to lack the success of past years.

**ARRL SS CW & SSB** were operated from 2 different Northern NY locations. K2NNY/cw was placed on the air from Paul's, K2DB's camp while K2NNY/ssb was operated from my place. The later of the two locations literally decided hours before the contest. Seems a bit of that white stuff fell during that contest week and Paul's place would become inaccessible. Never being ones to pass up a challenge, the K2NNY gang headed up north during the worst of the storm to erect single band dipoles the morning of the 'test. Both efforts got us "sweeps" and "mugs" and made many an op's weekend with "that last section".

**CQWW CW** was yet another 10 meter "blast". 110 of my 331 q's this time. All I can remember is getting up on Sunday morning with the biggest opening to Europe I've ever heard along with OX, JW, T32, 9H & TF in the log. Remember, I've yet to see a "peak". Honestly, I was overwhelmed and had a hard time concentrating with signals spreading to the novice band. Wish I had more time to operate that one.

Missed the **ARRL 160 & 10 meter** contests this year but I understand the 10 meter contest didn't enjoy the previously mentioned openings and the 160 'test was once again dominated by Joe, K8FC.

**CQWW 160 CW** was a blast though I had little time to operate. With the now infamous "K2DB Special", an UN-inverted "L" that runs 8 feet off the ground 64 feet out then vertical from there for 64 feet, I managed to work 197 q's with I, EA8, G, P4 & TI in the mix. With the bands crowded with much more powerful stations, it's nice to have the DX hang in there for us peanut whistles.

**ARRL DX CW** is my favorite contest, just edging out the ARRL 160m DX. Always an advantage to have the DX *needing* to work *you*. 10 meters never really opened as it had during the CQWW CW 'test so not much time was spent there. While speaking to K2FR on an another issue, he mentioned that 80 meters was in good shape the first night of the contest. I hadn't spent any time on 80 the night before because frankly, I just can't compete with wires and 100 watts. But this time, Fred was right! I knocked off 60 q's, an all time high. I had a 40 q search and pounce run on 40 meters at the end of the 'test indicating the low bands were hot. 15m was a waste of time after working the Caribbean gang.

**CQWW 160 SSB** is a very tough 'test with the aforementioned operating station. With a few hours invested, 47 stations managed to pull me out of the QRN. I think my best was KS, but have worked to California in past years, leading me to believe band conditions weren't that great.

All in all, things have been pretty good this year. You'll all have an opportunity to experience the same during the upcoming CQWW WPX 'tests.

Thanks to all who have submitted logs. **ANY** score helps! **PLEASE**, send in even the 1 & 2 q weekends, I'd like to see us hit 20 million this year!

Get on, **you'll never know what you're missing unless you give a listen.**

73 de Chris, K2CS

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## From Your license class coordinator

Greetings. Well spring is almost here. Soon it will be Rochester hamfest time. Hopefully we will have good weather.

Anyway 21 people enrolled in the novice/tech theory and novice CW class. 3 students are taking the general theory. Nobody is taking general CW this term. Only 1 for advanced so it wasn't offered, and nobody for extra. We were very pleased at the turnout for the classes. The exam session will be held on May 18th. Happy hamming.

Lynn Rosenberg N2IZX

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# PUBLIC SERVICE 1998

By Ed Holdsworth N2EH  
EC/RO Monroe County

The time is fast approaching to plan for our Public Service events for 1998. Listed below are those that we participate in every year. Some of the dates have not been set as of this time and are subject to change.

- R. E. Ginna Radiological Pre-Drill, Wednesday, March 25.
- R. E. Ginna Radiological Drill, Wednesday, May 6.
- Walk-Fish Hatchery Sunday, April 26 Powder Mill Park, 10:00am - 3:30pm
- ADA Tour de Cure Saturday, May 30.
- SCCA Pro Road Rally June 5,6 & 7
- Stuart Horse Trials. Saturday, Aug. 1.
- Walnut Hill Driving Competition Aug. 12th through 18.
- Pumpkin Patrol NYS Thruway October 30 & 31

These are the events that I have at this time but I will keep you posted as others are made known. PLEASE NOTE THAT THE DATE FOR THE GINNA PRE-DRILL IS IN MARCH AND IS FAST APPROACHING. PLEASE LET ME KNOW AS SOON AS POSSIBLE IF YOU WILL BE ABLE TO PARTICIPATE. The predrill may have already occurred by the time you read this!

FOR SALE: ICOM IC-751A - 160 to 10 meters, 100W, All mode, general coverage receiver, CW filter +, \$700. Down East Microwave, 6M transverter, 10M IF, 20 mv drive, 15W out, \$225. Cushcraft A50-6S, 6M beam, 6 element, 20 ft. boom, stainless steel hardware, \$100. Len "WA2ZNC", 229-5470

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# RaRa Rag 20 Years Ago

Ed Gable K2MP

April 1978: The program for April was a film titled Polar Adventure which told the tale of a trip to the South pole. Shown were Russian amateur stations as well as sever KC4 sites. Hosted by the Antique Wireless Association, this film was narrated by Bud Waite, W2ZK. RaRa President Ed Gable, K2MP, announced the just formed nominating committee chaired by the always active Bud Young WA2UGE, with George Negus N2IOU, Tom Woodford K2TXO and the equally ever-present Len Gessin WA2ZNC. Membership Chairman Bob Erskin, W2NVZ, reports that RaRa was the largest Amateur Radio Club in the state with 720 paid members. After many years of absence from the Field Day ranks, RaRa was ready to try again under the leadership of Otto Bluntzer, WB2RJB and Fred Shippey, WA2BQA. No FD site was indicated. April 21st was the scheduled date for RaRa Ladies Night where a trip to the Planetarium was the featured event. And the answer is YES....to last month's question regarding the battle of the local advertisers. Not only did *JR Radio Supply* and *Amateur Radio of Rochester* continue their full page advertisements, but they were joined by a third and new advertiser; *2001 Microsystems* of Ridge Road West in Rochester. *2001 Microsystems* featured the full line of MITS/Altair computer products. Oh, but the fun continues, now we have *Hamtronics* of Greece and *Harvey's Ham* of Caledonia feuding with more modest advertisements. *Hamtronics* countered by sporting more than their popular vhf kits and adding Cushcraft, Larsen, Hi-Gain, CDR and others to their shelves. Today, only *Hamtronics*, now of Hilton, continues in business and doing well.

FOR SALE: Compaq Deslpro 286, mint condx. 640K Ram, 20Meg HD Math Co-Processor. Okidata dot matrix printer included. \$100/BO. Wally, W2PG 225-6192

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# K2JD VHF CONTEST OPERATION

by Pete Fournia, W2SKY

The RaRa club station K2JD was again on the air during the January VHF contest. You could not miss it! This time with 6 different voices... those of Mike - KC2BTW, Bob - KB2ZGN, Allen - KB2VZE, Bill - WB2SXY, George - N2UIO and Pete - W2SKY.

Why did we do it? The operators thought it was enjoyable and fun. Fun to operate an array of equipment that is not normally available to us. Fun to do it with some new ham buddies that we had only met on the air. Fun to operate the hottest VHF contest in the area; to test our skills against other clubs competing in the Rochester Cup. Fun to fool with mother nature... to explore the potential of making long range contacts using weak signal modes on the VHF bands.

The K2JD station is located in the Monroe County Social Services building at 111 Westfall Rd. It is commissioned by the office of emergency preparedness and is operational on most all frequencies and modes that amateur radio offers. K2JD antennas are obvious to hams driving on Rt. 390 at intersections near routs 15 and 15a. Yes, those antennas atop the tallest building are ham antennas and its more than the two HF beams and towers that you see.

Part of the fun of operating K2JD is getting to learn the 5 operator positions at the station. We used all of them except the HF position. Most active was position #1 equipped with a 2 meter all mode IC271 transceiver and ringo ranger. It was used exclusively on 2 meter FM. All operators got to use this.

The #2 position was identical using a separate 2 meter vertical antenna. Here the receiver was used to monitored 146.88 as a call-in for the operators. We also used the computer for logging. Our computer logging was typical of the operation... laid back. Logs were basically done manually with infrequent update to a master electronic log using the W2HPF program. Occasionally a dup sheet was printed to assist at the 2 meter and 440 positions. George, N2UIO usually logged his contacts on a 8088 laptop.

Position #3 was a hot bed for weak signal (CW and SSB). It is equipped with a Kenwood 700S all mode transceiver on 2 meter and a IC575H transceiver on 6 meter. These used Yagi antennas for 2 meter vertical, 2 meter horizontal, 6 meter and a optional omnidirectional high gain vertical on 2 meter. Unfortunately the rotator did not work... but we did great toward the SE into FN21. We got our RaRa Rag 6

23 grid squares from this position. Some of our best grids were EN91 on 6 M SSB, FN33 on 6M CW, and FN21 on 6M CW. Our 2M total was 126 QSO's on FM and weak signal. Our 6M total was 64 QSO's.

Position #4 was the workhorse for 220 and 440 bands. These are equipped with an IC451 430 MHz all mode transceiver, IC47 440 MHz FM transceiver and a IC37, 220 MHz FM transceiver. The antennas were omnidirectional verticals. Our 220 station seem to be dead with only 16 QSO's. The 440 was a lot better with 60 QSO's all on FM.

So, what was our score?. We did 100% on fun and enjoyment! For ARRL points it was 7866. For the Rochester Cup it was 43 points. But the BIG result is not known. I'm referring to announcement of the Rochester Cup club competition. The K2JD score is a very small part of our RaRa club total. The RaRa total is dominated by the sum of individual RaRa members who submitted a log. What will our RaRa score be this year and which club will win the Rochester Cup? Announcement will be made at the Rochester VHF Group banquet on April 20. Stay tuned.

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## SKYWARN Training Session Saturday 9AM, April 25th Rochester EOC

The National Weather Service will be conducting a SKYWARN Training Session Saturday, April 25th at 9 AM. The session will be held at the Monroe County Office of Emergency Preparedness...located at 111 Westfall Road in Rochester.

By using their licensed ability to communicate on the air waves... Amateur Radio Operators can become the eyes and ears of their community to relay potentially life saving information to the National Weather Service. Even with the implantation of Doppler Radar...NOTHING beats a pair of trained eyes in the field!

Topics to be discussed include...the ingredients necessary for thunderstorm development...the life cycle of a thunderstorm...types of severe weather and their frequency in western New York...environmental clues to watch for...frequencies and procedures to use to report severe weather...and of course...some basic severe weather tips.

The training session will be a multi-media presentation which will last approximately 2 hours.

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For Sale: HEATH SB-221, 2KW Linear Amplifier - Pair Of 3-500Z. Dave K2ZFM, 266-3158 (\$409 BO)

## NEW ARRL BOOK--RF EXPOSURE AND YOU--NOW AVAILABLE

If you're worried about how to comply with the FCC's new RF exposure requirements, then you'll want a copy of the new ARRL book RF Exposure and You by ARRL Lab Supervisor Ed Hare, W1RFI. RF Exposure and You became available just this week.

As ARRL Executive Vice President Dave Sumner, K1ZZZ, put it: "The new RF exposure rules are now a part of the regulatory landscape and are likely to remain so." RF Exposure and You is the best way available to ease the transition, Sumner said.

This book communicates one simple message: For the vast majority of Amateur Radio operators, the RF exposure rules are not difficult to understand and follow. At 320 pages, RF Exposure and You contains all the background information, suggestions and worksheets you'll need to help you comply with the new RF exposure rules and to operate your station legally and safely.

Hare said that preparing the book was "a real challenge and a real collective effort." The result is a book that's probably the first of its kind. "I have never seen this information pulled together in one place before," he said. ARRL Headquarters staff and volunteers (including the ARRL RF Safety Committee) participated fully with the FCC as the Commission determined the best advice to give amateurs on how to meet the new requirements. The League was able to persuade the FCC to reconsider its rules, and to rewrite them so that amateurs would be less affected. Hare says it took a lot of teamwork between Headquarters staff and outside volunteers to have the book printed and available in just three months.

A. J. Kruger, K7CMM, of Arizona, placed the first advance order for RF Exposure and You early this year. This week, Hare personally autographed the first copy out of the box--indicating it was the first copy purchased from ARRL Headquarters. The order went out this week.

RF Exposure and You is \$15 (plus shipping and handling). Order Item #6621. To order your copy, visit your local Amateur Radio retailer or the ARRLWeb, <http://www.arrl.org/catalog/6621>, or call toll-free 888-277-5289.

*Tnx ARRL Letter*

FOR SALE / WANTED: Sell Tek 465B scope with DM44 DVM, cart and manuals \$300.00. Sell 6 foot, 19" fully enclosed rack. WANT working late model 2 meter FM mobile. Malcolm KE6TUB/2, 315-789-4934

## AMATEUR RADIO OUTLOOK COMMITTEE WANTS TO HEAR FROM YOU!

The Amateur Radio Outlook Committee wants to hear from you! The committee--appointed last fall during the International Amateur Radio Union Administrative Council meeting in Beijing, China--seeks comments from hams on their views concerning the future of Amateur Radio in the age of the Internet. The comment deadline is June 30, 1998.

IARU President Richard Baldwin, W1RU, appointed the Amateur Radio Outlook Committee. Its members are Chairman Thomas Atkins, VE3CDM; Lou van de Nadort, PA0LOU; and Yoshiji Sekido, JJ1OEY. The idea to solicit comments stemmed from a "lively discussion" at the September Council session about the Internet and its impact on the Amateur Radio Service. This prompted the Council to consider addressing concerns about the future growth and development of ham radio. In addition to reviewing the current and future state of the art in the Amateur and Amateur Satellite Services "in the light of the changing technology and the Internet," the Outlook Committee also will focus on technology, techniques, and future developments, and make general recommendations on the future growth and development of Amateur Radio.

IARU member societies already have begun to discuss the issue. Input from all amateurs is welcome. Address comments to Amateur Radio Outlook Committee, c/o IARU, PO Box 310905, Newington, CT 06131-0905; e-mail [aroc@iaru.org](mailto:aroc@iaru.org); <http://www.iaru.org/outlook1.html>; <http://www.iaru.org/outlook2.html>--IARU

*Tnx ARRL Letter*

**Patrick C. Moyer, N2AIW**  
*Attorney & Counselor-at-Law*

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