



# the RARA RAG

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Sept. 1998

NO. 1

## September 11<sup>th</sup> Meeting ISDN, The Next Step Beyond 56K

by Bob Moore, N2USB

The **September 11<sup>th</sup>** meeting at the Henrietta Fire Station #1 starts off the new season for RARA, and a new season of interesting programs. These presentations will cover topics as varied as high speed digital communications, APRS, DX, to satellite communications and others. I hope you will attend every meeting and enjoy the programs presented for you by local Amateurs.

We are looking forward to starting this year's programs with a presentation by RARA's own John Woika, W8JW titled "ISDN, The Next Step Beyond 56K." Come and learn if this transportation mode is the right one to replace your old modem. What does it take to bring ISDN to your house? How much does it cost? What is the value of this? "What's beyond ISDN?" John will share the latest with us. Also, I would like to hear from anyone who has an idea about a topic of general interest that you would like to see presented at a meeting. Or, if you would consider presenting a program on one of your special interest, please let me know.

## 1998-99 Amateur Radio License Testing Season

by George Platteter, AA2FO

Get licensed, upgrade, The Fall season is fast approaching, and it's the advent of the official 1998-99 RaRa Testing Season.

The sessions are held monthly from September thru May on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of each month, with the exception of September (4<sup>th</sup> Saturday), and May (Hamfest). In addition we will be conducting a testing session at the Buffalo Hamfest and at the conclusion of both the Fall and Spring RaRa License classes.

The exams are conducted at the Monroe County Social Services Building, 111 Westfall Rd., in the Cafeteria. Registration normally takes place at 8:30AM and the exams start at 9:00AM.

Exam dates are as follows:

September 26  
October 17  
November 21  
December 19  
January 16  
February 20  
March 20  
April 17  
May - Hamfest

Walk In. or Mail/Call reservations to:

George Platteter, AA2FO, 716 334-4488  
82 Colonnade Dr.  
Rochester, NY 14623

In addition to a pen and pencil all applicants should bring with them two (2) forms of identification, your original FCC License and also a copy of the license (the copy will be turned in) and also a copy of any current Certificates of Completion for exam elements passed at another test session.

A fee will be charged for the exam (currently \$6.35). Handicapped applicants are welcomed. Please phone in advance so we may best meet your needs.

### **RaRa MEETING**

**Sept. 11, 1998**

**8:00 P.M.**

Henrietta Fire Hall  
13129 East Henrietta Road  
at corner of Lehigh Station Rd.

**ISDN, The next step beyond 56K**

# the RARA RAG

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## The Prez says...

by Rick Wells, W2RW, President RARA

It seems like the June picnic was just a few weeks ago but summer is coming to a close. School is starting and it's time to begin another Amateur Radio Season! Thanks to everyone who helped out with one thing or the other at the picnic. A special thank you to Tim and Cheryl Magee, WB2KAO and WA2DKC, who volunteered to be the picnic chairpeople this year. We had good food and a great time. Don't forget to put the RARA picnic on your calendar for next year.

Welcome to the new officers, directors and committee chairs. Thank you for stepping up to the challenge and serving your club. Take note that after some ten years, so I am told, Neal Eckhardt, WB2EKP has turned the *Rag* over to George Platteter, AA2FO. Neal, thanks for your years of dedicated service. Everybody else, please consider helping your new editor out by contributing something. Maybe you worked something new during a 10 meter opening this summer or maybe you found some E-skip on 6. What did you do for field day this year? Write it up and send it to George. We'd like to hear about your experiences.

This upcoming season should prove to be interesting. Are you aware of the massive licensing restructuring proposal that the ARRL has laid out? If so, good for you for finding the time and enthusiasm during the busy summer to keep current. If not, you'll probably want to check it out, either by reading *QST*, checking the League's web site, or by on-the-air conversation. If you have a license, this is going to effect you. Now is the time to get involved and communicate your feelings to your League director and section manager. As much as I hate to think about it, I'm getting to be an old timer. Since I went through the FCC licensing process in the early 60s and enjoy CW contesting I have a lot of mixed feelings about some of the proposed changes. I do however, see the inconsistencies in the present structure and would like to see some types of change. This will be a subject for another month.

Want to get prepared for what ever happens? Consider upgrading and attend the RARA license class of your choice. Under the ARRL proposal, hams with 5 WPM CW under their belt may get considerable HF privileges. Why not come out to the 5 WPM CW class being taught by the master, Tim Magee, WB2KAO. See the license class article elsewhere in this month's *Rag* for more information on the classes.

So what's ahead for this season? Lots of stuff! Your vice president Bob Moore, N2USB, is preparing an interesting lineup of guest speakers for

the monthly meetings. Club station trustee Ed Holdsworth, N2EH, is working on the possibility of a significant upgrade to K2JD. There's always plenty of public service events to get involved with. I like the Pumpkin Patrol myself. And finally, the season culminates with the Rochester Hamfest. How about having even more fun at the -fest next June. Come out and do something instead of just showing up. Please see Harold Smith, N2HC, or Ed Holdsworth, N2EH, about what needs to be done and how you can help.

Don't forget to fire up that radio for the ARRL September VHF QSO party on the 12<sup>th</sup> of this month. Also there's the Worked All Europe and several other contests to have fun with. Solar flux is getting to be around 110 now. That's up by 40 points from this time last year. Tired of dull, boring, wired communication on your computer, then turn on that radio and have a ball. Come out to the monthly meetings. Sign up for a public service event. Try operating at the club station. Find a way to get involved. Ham radio is more fun as a team sport. See you at the September meeting.

73 es gud DX,  
Rick, W2RW

## RAPS

By Jack Tripp, N2SNL

RAPS is the Rochester Amateur Packet Society. Membership is open to anyone in the amateur radio community who has an interest in packet radio. Experienced packeteers, as well as newcomers, are welcome to join. We meet on the 2nd Thursday of each month from September through May, at 7:30 P.M. in the first floor auditorium of the Monroe County Social Services Building at 111 Westfall Road. Dues are \$5.00 per year. Our first meeting for the coming year is Thursday, September 10th.

The members of the RAPS organization promote the use of packet radio and are willing to help anyone interested in getting started in this great part of amateur radio. The club has built an inexpensive modem to help get you started in packet radio which can be purchased for \$35.00. This includes a copy of Baycom software and instructions for connecting the modem to your computer and radio. For further information contact Jack Tripp, N2SNL, e-mail: [jat@frontiernet.net](mailto:jat@frontiernet.net) or by phone at 381-7757.

**WANTED:** Collector/historian buying vintage amateur equipment, parts, tubes, etc.  
Ed 392-3088

## RaRa Rag 20 Years Ago

by Ed Gable K2MP

September 1978: This RaRa season kick off meeting, held at the Monroe County Co-op Extension building, featured John Theimer, FCC District Engineer, speaking on recent changes to Amateur Rules and Regulations. In his welcoming message, president Len Gessin, WA2ZNC, reminds people that there will be no smoking at RaRa meetings. Writing for the Rochester DX Association, Ray Leigh, W2SNI, reports that Ken Palmer, K2FJ, VP2DX, PJ8DX, PJ0US, et al, will be guest speaker. Silent keys were W2TEX, K2QIV and W2BCL. Tim Magee, WB2KAO, reporting for the RRRRA, announces that their meeting will be held at RF Communications and will be a FM radio tune up clinic. Summer activity included the first Scotch Bonnet yacht race hosted by the Genesee Yacht Club. Ham radio activity was headed by Jim Ttiefenthal, W2IS, and Dwight Hill, K2KWK. Some serious 2-meter equipment was used to cover the 120 mile distance. Otto Bluntzer, WB2RJB, reports that the RaRa Field Day was a success with 14 participants. The Club mobile van, K2JD/m, was used. A new repeater in Greece went live on 146.625 with the call WR2AOH. Trustee was Nelson, WA2ZPE. Two full page ads continue the advertising war between *JR's* on Lake avenue and *Amateur Radio of Rochester* on Scottsville Road. A new advertiser is *ATR Communications* (Wally W2PG) on Lyell Avenue.

**FOR SALE:** Discone Scanner Antenna. Receives VHF/UHF 25 MHz through 1300 MHz (1.3 GHz); Transmits at 144, 220, 440, 900, 1296 MHz. Like new, with feed line. Only \$39.00. Irv Goodman, AF2K, (716) 671-4430

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# RagChew

by Lloyd R. Caves, WB2EFU

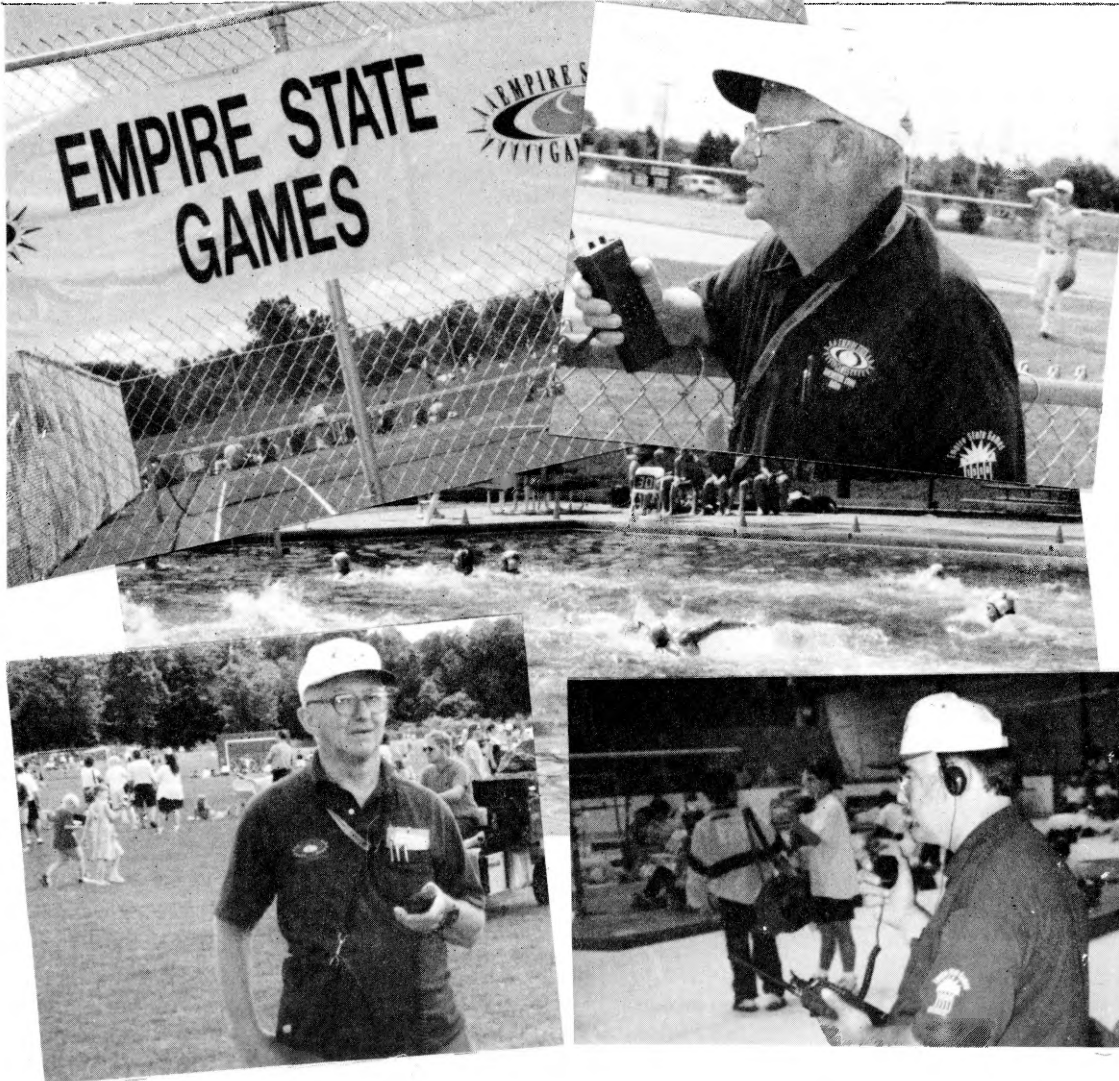
Are you reading the *RARA Rag* for the first time or are you reading the one issue a year that you receive? If so that is because you are not a member of RARA and maybe you should be. Why you ask? Well there are two good reasons. One is that you have a lot to give to amateur radio and a club. The second is that clubs can have a lot to give to their members.

No matter what your interest is in radio there is always something new to learn and enjoy. RARA is a general interest club that has all aspects of amateur radio at heart. There are members that use only repeaters on VHF and UHF, some only operate HF, others work only DX or are into contesting, while others are into digital communications or TV (fast or slow scan), not to mention those that work satellites and space stations. Not only that but there are a lot of folks that are experimenters or antique collectors. Just from this you see that you can meet someone at a meeting that you can learn something

from other than just the speakers or will have the same interests as you. So why not join now or at least try out some of the meetings and have fun with your friends.

As a Special Service Club RARA always has something going on besides meetings to attend. Things like public service events, license classes, and license exam sessions as well as social events such as a picnic. The club supports a complete amateur radio station from HF to UHF for its members to operate. Not only that but it has the only ATV repeater in the area and is home to a packet node station. Once again, no matter what your interest or needs are RARA has it for you.

Now for what you can give to a club. Well your interest in this great hobby of ours is a good start. The fun of being with others is another plus. Join in the fun at public service events and learn how to put your radio skills to work to help others while at the same time having some laughs and a good time with friends (old or new). These events are used for learning whether it is your first time out or you are



an old timer at it. They are fun to attend and not something to be afraid of. Also, you can always help in the license classes, testing sessions or in maintaining the club station. Being active at the meetings by talking to others and sharing your experiences is another way to give something to the club.

Remember that a club is only as good as its members. The more you enjoy being a part of an organization the more the organization will grow and be able to give you what you want in return. One third of the Board of Directors of RARA are new to their office this year. This means that this would be another good time to join or come to meetings and bring your ideas with you. Make the board respond to your needs and requirements and try some new things. With these new directors there will always someone willing to listen to you and bring your ideas to the officers to implement. Clubs are only good for you when they are fun. You can bring fun and laughs with you to meetings or other functions as well as make suggestions to your board that will start them doing things that are enjoyable for all.

## Buffalo Hamfest '98

by Lloyd R. Caves, WB2EFU

On September 19, 1998 the same folks who present the Rochester Hamfest in May bring you the ninth Buffalo Hamfest and Computer Show combined with the ARRL Western New York Section Convention at the Erie County Fairgrounds. The Fairgrounds is on Route 62-South Park Ave. in Hamburg.

There will be a large number of amateur radio and computer equipment dealers and manufactures at the Hamfest this year. Expect to find all the new amateur equipment, computer equipment and associated supplies at bargain prices. Now is the time to buy that new equipment you have been dreaming about so that you can enjoy it all winter.

Come and have a great time and enjoy one of the last few Hamfests left this year.



# QRZed w/ ALEX, NV2Y

Location- RaRa Exams

It is said that truth can be stranger than fiction. After giving a 13 word per minute CW exam, I collected the completed 10 question exam and the work paper containing the actual copy as received by the examinee.

In going over one of the exams I was astonished to find that only one question out of the 10 was circled correctly. How can this be! At first glance the examinee had filled out his work sheet in a clean beautiful print. I could not have done better if I had typed it out. Surely all the information he needed must all be there. Did the examinee panic, freeze up? Surely there must be a least one minute of perfect copy somewhere in that written paragraph. Should have gotten more than one question correct. Something is not right here. Was the correct exam given?

I picked up the work sheet where the code was copied as it was received. When giving the CW exam it is not enough to have the written test key in front of the examiner. Mistakes happen... You, the examiner, must copy the code, either in your head, or writing it down, to insure that what is being sent agrees with the test key and 10 question sheet you will be handing out.

In an effort to get things straightened out, I started to read the written copy of the exam, eager to find something I could do to help. Egad!!! What's this!!! Those are not the call letters sent. That is not the QTH of the sender. What's this about the weather. There was nothing in the message about the weather. The YL- where did that come from? The message sent was from two fellows making a chance contact on the air.

I looked at the sheet in wonderment as to how the examinee could copy this message from the contact we sent. I read it over and over again to insure I hadn't lost it.

Then it dawned on me where I had seen this message before. It had come verbatim from a Gordon West practice tape.

Need I say more...

As membership chairman I received letters from two old timers at about the same time. This was about three years ago. I never answered their question. Thought I'd give them a chance to cool off. The question-- "Who is the oldest ham in RaRa"?

The way I see it, I wouldn't complain of being second.

Just think about it. You still may have a chance at being first.

RaRa Rag 6

# FCC Proposes Drastic Changes

Date: Tuesday, August 11, 1998 12:06PM

*This is the text of a WIAW Bulletin being run today*

FCC proposes to streamline amateur rules

The FCC has proposed to phase out the Novice and Technician Plus class licenses, leaving just four amateur license classes in place--Technician, General, Advanced, and Extra. The Commission also has asked the amateur community to express its opinions on Morse code requirements for licensing and testing, but offered no specific changes. And the FCC proposed to permit Advanced class licensees to administer amateur exams up through General class. The proposals were among several suggested rules changes and invitations to comment contained in an FCC Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, WT Docket 98-143, made public August 10.

In proposing to phase out the Novice and Tech Plus tickets, the FCC said "there appears to be an unnecessary overlap between the Novice, Technician, and Technician Plus license classes." In addition, the FCC said Novice applicants last year numbered fewer than 1000, while there were nearly 21,500 Technician applications.

Under the FCC plan, Novice and Tech Plus licensees would retain current operating privileges, but no new Novice or Tech Plus licenses would be granted. For examination purposes, current examination elements 2 and 3A would be combined into a new element 3A. For administrative purposes, the FCC would combine the current Technician and Tech Plus databases into a single Technician database. The proposal would eliminate the 5 WPM code test, Element 1A, as a required element for any class of license.

The elimination of the Novice and Tech Plus license classes would effectively raise the bar for future applicants desiring to gain HF operating privileges, unless the FCC ultimately reduces Morse code testing requirements. Since the General class license would become the entry-level HF ticket under the FCC's proposed rules, applicants would have to pass at least the 13 WPM code test.

The FCC did not propose to change any operating frequencies or license privileges for amateurs. However, the FCC does seek comments on the disposition of the current Novice HF bands, which carry a 200-W output power limit for all licensees. The FCC invited comment on whether it would be "appropriate" to delete the Novice bands and the power restrictions on higher-class licensees and permit Novices to operate CW anywhere on 80, 40, 15, and 10 meters at 200 W output.

The FCC opened the door to comments on all aspects of Morse code testing from the amateur community. In particular, the Commission said it wants to know if hams prefer the current three-level system or would like to see it reduced to a one or two-tier system--and, if so, at what required speeds. The FCC asked whether hams would be willing to trade a reduction in Morse code requirements for additional written elements on newer digital technologies "which, in part, are replacing the Morse code." And, the Commission asked whether it should consider specifying Morse code examination methods, such as fill-in-the-blank or one minute of solid copy, instead of allowing VEs to determine the testing method.

The FCC went along with an ARRL petition and proposed allowing Advanced class hams to be eligible to prepare and administer license examinations up through General class under the VE program. The FCC also invited comments on whether it should change written examination requirements "to provide VEs and VECs additional flexibility in determining the specific contents of written examinations."

Referring to yet another ARRL petition, RM-9150, the FCC invited comments on how it can improve its Amateur Radio enforcement processes. The FCC applauded the ARRL "for its creative thinking" in that petition, but said the specific proposal was "inconsistent" with the current statutory role of administrative law judges. The FCC raised the possibility of encouraging complainants to include a draft order "to show cause to initiate a revocation or cease and desist hearing proceeding." The FCC said it also wants to hear how it can better use the services of the Amateur Auxiliary in beefing up enforcement.

The FCC proposed to phase out Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service, or RACES, stations by not renewing their licenses. No new RACES licenses have been issued since 1980, and only 249 valid licenses remain. The FCC said RACES stations no longer are needed because any amateur station that has been properly registered with a civil defense organization has the same privileges as a RACES station.

The FCC also took the occasion to clarify the definition of "power" as used in the RF exposure table in Section 97.13(c)(1). The FCC said it refers to peak envelope power (PEP) input to the antenna. It also made clear that no one holding an FCC-issued ham ticket may apply for a reciprocal permit for alien amateur license.

The FCC set a longer-than-normal comment period. The deadline for comments is December 1, 1998. The deadline for reply comments is January 15, 1999.

The FCC will accept electronic comments via the Internet at <http://www.fcc.gov/e-file/ecfs.html>.

A copy of the complete NPRM will be posted on the ARRLWeb page, <http://www.arrl.org>, as soon as it is available.

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## **Fall License Class Announcement**

by Tim Magee, WB2KAO  
License Class Director

Registration for September licensing classes will be held on Monday September 14, 1998, at 7:00 PM, 111 Westfall Rd., the Monroe County Social Services building in the auditorium. We will be offering 5 and 13 word per minute CW, Novice/Technician and General theory. Advanced or Extra theory class will be offered depending on interest. I would ask that all persons who are interested in any class come to the registration on Monday the 14<sup>th</sup>. Joe Hood, K2YA, will teach Advanced or Extra on Tuesdays from 7:00 to 8:00 PM. All other classes will be held on Monday evenings from 7:00 to 9:00 PM.



Those not able to attend registration should leave a message on the RARA hotline 716-442-0587. Tim Magee, WB2KAO, and Art Debruycker, W2YGW, will be teaching the 5 and 13 WPM respectively. Rick Wells, W2RW, will be teaching Novice/Tech theory with Bill Kasperkoski, WB2SXY, teaching General theory. The Monday classes will be run from 7:00 to 9:00 PM for a period of approximately 12 weeks with the final class being a W5YI/VEC testing session. I would encourage my fellow amateurs to spread the word and let's have a good showing in the Fall classes. I'm looking forward to teaching and working with the rest of my staff. The cost for a non-licensed Novice/Tech student will be \$28 (book \$18, class instruction \$4, RARA associate membership \$6). All other classes will be \$26 (book \$12, class instruction \$4, RARA full membership \$10).

## RaRa/ARRL Award Checking

By Ed Gable k2mp/w2an

As a service to you, members of RaRa, an ARRL Special Service Club, you can have QSL cards verified for ARRL Worked All States (WAS) and VHF/UHF Century Club (VUCC) Awards. Contact Ed Gable, K2MP, for an appointment at 392-3088 or [k2mp@eznet.net](mailto:k2mp@eznet.net).

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