



THE RARA RAG

Published by
ROCHESTER AMATEUR RADIO ASSOCIATION, INC.

VOL. 63

January 2011

NO. 5

January's Meeting: Emergency Power

More severe weather storms will be here before we know it, and so will the occasional power outage that comes along with them. Since batteries and generators are the most common way of powering radio equipment when not connected to the power grid, our January meeting topic—Emergency/Alternative Power—should be of vital interest to nearly every ham.

This month we have the pleasure of hearing from not one, but two experts in this field! First, you'll learn about the care and feeding of various types of batteries from Frank Pollino, K2OS. Frank is a Quality Engineer with Harris RF Communications with responsibility for batteries and chargers used with tactical military communications equipment. Then Mike Rink, W2HYP, - Electrical Supervisor for the University of Rochester Strong Memorial Hospital Operations and a trustee for the WR2AHL repeater system - will explain how to choose and use a portable power generator for ham radio use and how the 145.11 repeater is able to stay on the air when the power goes out. Hope to see you there for this presentation. We promise it will be "electrifying"!



Generators and batteries come in many sizes...
How much power do YOU want?

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RARA Meeting
Jan. 7th, 2011 7:30PM

Henrietta Fire Co. #1
3129 East Henrietta Rd. (15A)



The Prez Sez

By Frank Schramm, WB2PYD
President, RaRa

Happy New Year! Not only is this the first issue of the RAG for the new year, it is the first issue to be distributed to almost every ham in the region! Without the encumbrances of paper, ink, and postage, we can reach out even further to include more fellow Hams in our club's activities. Anyone who doesn't want to receive our club newsletter can click on the "opt-out" link in the e-mail they received to download this issue. We want to make more Hams aware of RaRa; what we do, and what we have to offer. Our monthly meetings and presentations are open to anyone who wants to attend—members and non-members alike. The January program topic on alternate power is one everyone reading this should plan to attend.

While RaRa offers a great deal to non-members, we do have our share of member's-only events and we hope that non-members will find those activities worth the price of membership. Our next member's-only event is Saturday January 29th. You won't want to miss the RaRa Cabin Party and Chili cook-off. We will be at the Hazelwood Grove Lodge in Ellison Park ([click here for a map](#)). This is a party for current members and their family – just one more reason to belong to RaRa! You can expect to spend the afternoon enjoying good food and friends in front of a roaring fire. Tell the kids to bring their sleds if there's snow on the ground. So let me tell you about this Chili competition... We will present the 1st place winner of the chili cook-off with \$50.00! Second place will receive \$25.00 and third place will receive 30 RaRa Membership Rewards Points. There will be a \$5.00 entry fee for each chili submitted for the competition, and judging will be by all who attend. Everyone will vote for their favorite, and the chili with the most votes will win. We'll have a **dessert competition too!** Same rules and prizes apply. So break out those secret recipes and enter as many times, and as many chilis as you want: hot, mild, with meat, without, etc... it's all up to you! There are only 4 burners at the cabin so be sure to bring your crock pot or hot plate. Festivities start at noon and we'll have plenty of bread and beverages to round out the meal. Please send me an RSVP with how many in your family will be attending, and if you'll be entering a dish in the competition, so we can plan accordingly - we want to make sure we have enough food!

If you need to join or renew a lapsed membership, visit our website (www.rochesterham.org) we take PayPal and credit cards. Memberships start at only \$8.00 and include FREE admission to the Rochester Hamfest!

While I've got your attention: Is there anyone out there with bookkeeping experience? We're looking for someone with practical or professional bookkeeping experience using QuickBooks for possible consulting to the club. If that's you, please contact me.

73, and HAPPY NEW YEAR!
Frank
WB2PYD

Calendar of Events

- Jan 7** RaRa General Meeting – 7:30 PM
Henrietta Fire Hall,
3129 E. Henrietta Rd
- Jan 12** RaRa Board of Directors
5:30 PM, RIT
Bldg-17, Room 2110
- Jan 15** RaRa VE Testing sessions
10:00 AM, RIT
Bldg-9, Room 3139
- Jan 29** RaRa Cabin Party
12 - Noon
Hazelwood Grove Lodge
Ellison Park
(PSE RSVP)



RaRa Hotline
(585) 210-8910
24 Hours a Day

Silent Key

John M. Coon, WA2FZU
Dec. 21, 2010

Rag-Chew

Editor's Thoughts & Comments
By Kevin Carey, WB2QMY
Editor@RochesterHam.org

Happy New Year to all readers! I'd like to extend a special welcome to our newest readers who may be seeing the *RARA Rag* for the first time under our new distribution policy (see the *Prez Sez* column). We hope you enjoy what the newsletter has to offer and will take part in the activities of our growing club.



Beginning with our October 2010 issue, the *Rag* went completely electronic (PDF), freeing us from limits on article length, and allowing us to include full color images and embedded hot links for web-based material. Please let me know what you think of the *RARA Rag* and if you have any suggestions for future articles. Better yet, why not write an article on some area of interest that you have in the ham radio hobby.

Speaking of articles, I am pleased to announce two new items this month. Bill Hopkins, AA2YV has written an introductory article on the joys of QRP operation. Bill is an active QRP operator and his enthusiasm for this part of the hobby is contagious!

We also have a new article on Shortwave Listening by Jay Golden, KC2YST. Jay has been a shortwave listener (SWL) for 55 years and has about 100 QSLs from broadcast and utility stations. He's been a member of North American Shortwave Association (NASWA) for over 30 years!

I was especially pleased to see a *Member Profile* in this issue for Dick Goslee, KG2I. When I was a young ham, I had acquired a secondhand Heathkit Keyer for my Novice station. It worked well for a while, but one day, it began sending only dits. I brought it to a friend who had been helping me along in the hobby, Art Bohnke, KA2BGW (SK). After doing some preliminary checks without the benefit of a manual, he said we needed to go and see Dick Goslee at the Heathkit store. I'd heard of Dick, but didn't know him personally, and wondered what to expect.

Dick greeted us at the counter, and when informed of our difficulty, he immediately popped the cover off the keyer and began making some voltage measurements on the circuit board. After just a few minutes, he had isolated the trouble to a faulty component, and replaced it on the spot. He then came out with a manual for the keyer so that I could learn more about the unit and tackle any future repairs; I still have that keyer and manual today. I've gotten to know Dick much better since that friendly encounter in the '80s, but in reading his profile, I learned a few new things about him, not the least of which that he had the first repeater on the air in the Rochester area.

Best wishes for 2011, and best DX!

VE News

By Ken Hall, W2KRH
VE Team Leader

We had nine candidates on November 20th, one General and eight Technician class:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Callsign</u>
James Sweet	KB2MJE
Edward Braiman Jr.	KC2ZLQ
George Charnitski	KC2ZLR
Alex Graff	KC2ZLS
Charlton Grant, Jr.	KC2ZLT
Lawrence Helber	KC2ZLU
Kimberly Hollingsworth	KC2ZLV
Richard Maus II	KC2ZLW
Bradley Williams	KC2ZLX

Best wishes to all during this Holiday season and especially to the members of the VE team who volunteer their time. This selfless activity is what makes the RARA VE Team the best.

Congratulations to all! The next session will be January 15th at 10 AM in RIT Building 9, Room 3139.

[\(click for map\)](#)

Registration starts at 10:00AM. Check the [RARA website](#) for additional information.



Ham Tech: eQSL

By Duane Fregoe, K2SI

Last month I wrote about the QSL Bureau which can be a lengthy process for getting that confirming QSL card in your hand. A much quicker option for getting a confirmation is with eQSL. The eQSL service is very similar to Logbook of the World in that ham radio operators can upload their electronic logs to a website. A number of electronic logging programs make this process automatic once you set up the software. The ARRL will not accept confirmations from eQSL but on the positive side eQSL confirmations *are* accepted for CQ awards and eQSL specific awards. eQSL will display a card for each confirmation which is something that LoTW does not do.

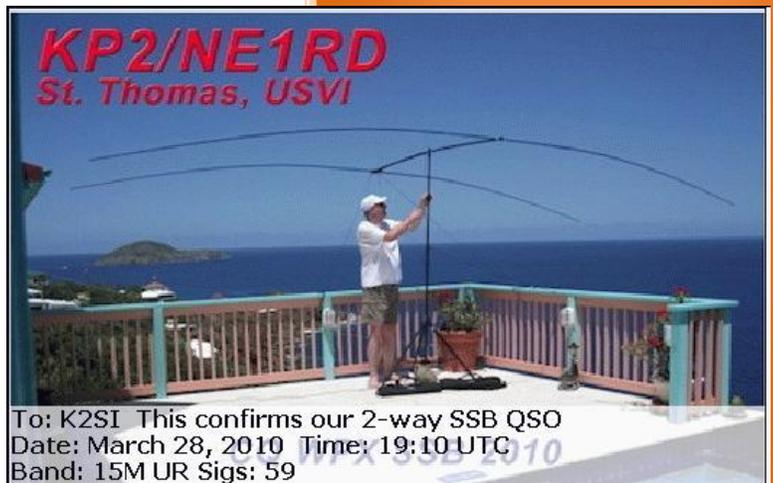
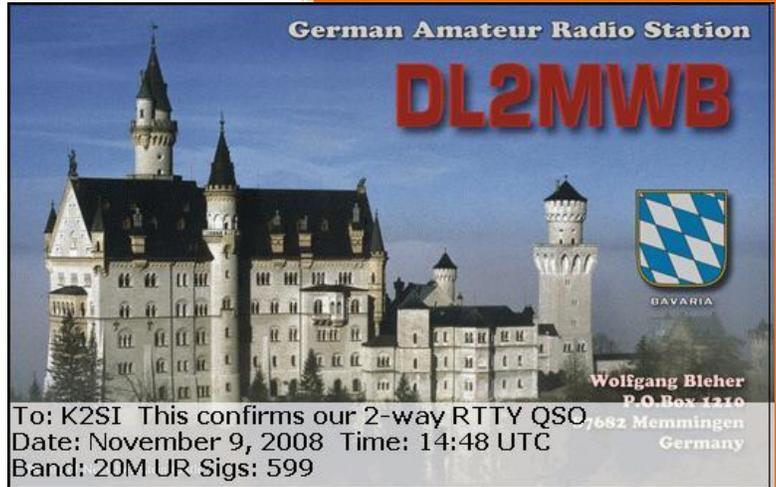
The website is located at www.eqsl.cc and a basic membership is free. There are three additional paid memberships available. They are the Bronze, Silver, and Gold Lifetime. Each level offers additional options from the website and allows you to create a custom QSL card. Once signed in you will want to verify your identity which amounts to forwarding a copy of your FCC license. For short wave listeners that wish to set up an account there are other options for verifying your identity.

Should you decide to go beyond the basic free membership there is a nice profile page that is created. To find a person's profile page just do a search for their call sign. In there you will see a copy of their QSL card and some bar graphs showing the bands and modes where they are making the most contacts. For an example, go to the eQSL web site and search for K2SI and you will see where I spend most of my time.

Setting up an account is free and easy. So the next time you are uploading your electronic logs to LoTW take an extra 60 seconds and upload the same log files to eQSL and soon the confirmations will begin. You will see some interesting cards.

Next month's Ham Tech: Global QSL

Three QSL cards received electronically, via the eQSL service



SKYWARN Recognition Day

By Duane Fregoe, K2SI

SKYWARN Recognition Day 2010 was held on December 4th. Ham radio operators from Western New York converged on the National Weather Service office in Buffalo to operate radio station WX2BUF. This is a 24-hour special event where over 100 National Weather Service stations get on the air. The NWS in Buffalo made 344 contacts in 45 states, including 39 other NWS offices. Also in the total were 27 other countries.

The goal for the ham community is to work as many NWS stations as possible. At the end of the event hams can submit their totals and request certificates based on the number of stations contacted. This is a good event for the new ham as local repeaters, IRLP, and Echolink are widely used by most of the NWS stations. In Buffalo for this year's event was Bill Kasperkoski (WB2SXY), Pam Kasperkoski (W2PHK), and myself (K2SI). Thanks to Mike Rink (W2HYP) for the use of the 145.11 repeater and its new IRLP node.



Pam, W2PHK and Bill, WB2SXY on the air at WX2BUF



Duane, K2SI on duty during SKYWARN Recognition Day. (Duane, what's the bucket on the shelf for? Just in case of a roof leak?)

WX2BUF

NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE
Buffalo N.Y.

**12th Annual
NWS-ARRL SKYWARN
Recognition Day - 2010**

OPERATORS:
 Judy N2TEZ Bob N3QOT
 Duane K2SI John KA2RFT
 Tom KB2NCI Adam KC2YQF
 Luke N2GDU Dave N2XYP
 Jim N8GXR John W2IV
 Pam W2PHK Bill WB2AIV
 Bill WB2SXY Steve WB2VMR

DATE	TIME (UTC)	STATION	RST	FREQUENCY	MODE
04 DEC 2010					

Special QSL Card for the 2010 SKYWARN event

Member Spotlight: Dick Goslee, KG2I

By Len Crellin, KC2PCD

Welcome to another issue of Member Spotlight. Each month we try to present a new RARA member to highlight. If you have someone you think would be interesting for us to interview, please send me, Len Crellin (kc2pcd@arrl.net), his or her name with a short introduction that we can include with the interview. Any photos or stories we can use will be appreciated too!

Our Ham of the Month for January is Dick Goslee, KG2I. Dick is no stranger to most area hams, as he has been a part of RARA for many years, and served in many different roles, including immediate past Editor of the RARA Rag. Dick answered the questions below to help us better understand his background in amateur radio hobby.

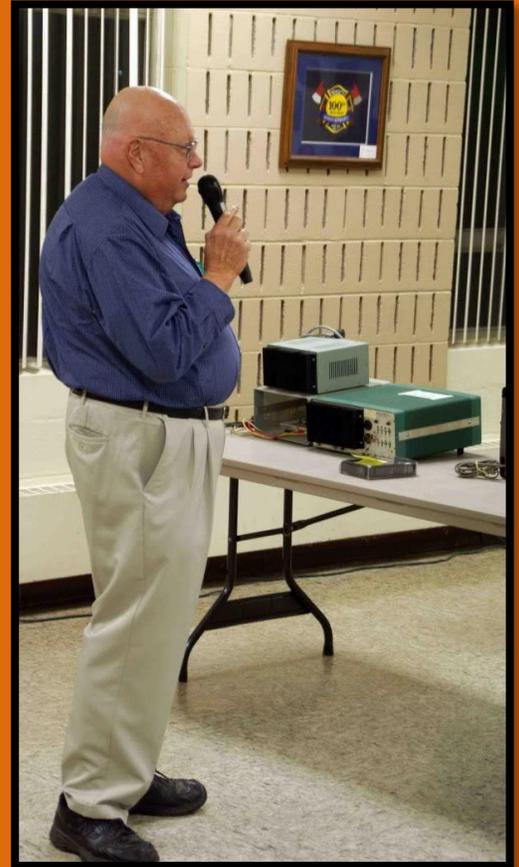
1. How did you become interested in ham radio? I was interested in getting my Morse code merit badge for the Scouts. When I started learning the code (the wrong way by looking at what the dots and dashes look like) I started thinking about getting my license and talking to other Hams. That was in 1956.

2. What are your favorite activities within the hobby? Over the years I have done most all forms of communications. For many years I was deeply involved in traffic handling and was a net control station for the NYSPTEN on 75 meters for many years. I was also Net Manager for a couple of years. I enjoy rag chewing probably most of all and an occasional DX contact. My most prized contact was Ireland on 6 meters. I was talking to Hank Blodgett, W2UTH (SK), one day and the Irish fellow called me. I couldn't believe it. Just after our exchanges the rest of the U.S. found us and that ended our conversation.

For many years I also headed a Field Day group called "Goz's Gang". We competed in the 3A category and had an ongoing local contest to beat another local group, the "Band-Di-Dahs". We even had our own Chef to cook all our meals while we operated. If you want to hear some interesting stories just ask Tim Magee, WB2KAO. He was one of our crack CW operators. Logging for Tim sure got my code speed up in a hurry as he didn't wait for me. I had to keep up or lose the contact.

3. How long have you been licensed? I passed my Novice test in January of 1957 and my first license (KN2VCZ) arrived in April. I have been continuously licensed ever since. After surviving Cancer in 2003 I decided it was time to retire the old call and I obtained my current vanity call KG2I.

4. How long have you been a member of RARA? What offices/positions /committees have you held? When I first moved to Rochester in 1965 there were no 2 meter repeaters in the area. For some reason Rochester was not on the list. Buffalo, Syracuse, Utica and Schenectady had repeaters so why not Rochester? In 1967, after moving to a house on Brighton St., I decided to set up a repeater. It was on 146.46 in and 146.94 out. In those days all repeaters were on 94 and only the input changed depending on where you were. The repeater had a short life (about two weeks) as there was interference from the stuff on Cobbs and Pinnacle Hills. John Plumeri, W2KZD (SK) and I tried a split site system since he was working at a TV station on Pinnacle hill. That never worked out, again due to the large amount of RF from the hill. Shortly after that the first meeting of a group of fellows from Kodak and Harris RF was held and the first repeater to work was started. It was what is now the "88" repeater. The rest, as they say, is history.



Dick Goslee, KG2I in action at the RARA Auction

I joined RARA in 1982 and was elected to the Board of Directors the following year. I made the mistake of mentioning to the current President Ray Roberts, WA2SSU (SK) that we needed a Financial Committee. He said fine, you are the new head of the Finance Committee. Shortly after that I became Vice President and then President. Following my term as President I was elected Treasurer. I held that position till 2004 when I retired. In May of 2005 I was elected President again. Following that term I was again elected Treasurer, a position I still hold today.

Since 1986 I have edited the Annual Directory and maintained the RARA Master Database of all the members and those Hams residing in the 144-146 ZIP code area. I also served as Advertising Manager for the RAG since the mid 80's and following the death of Ray Pickens, WA2MYG; I became the editor of the RAG. I held that position until my retirement this past September.

For over 20 years I worked on the annual Rochester Hamfest and served as the Assistant General Manager for four years. I was responsible for all the activities at the Dome Arena during that term. I also acted as the M.C. for the banquet held during the Hamfest.

I also served as the Chef for the burgers and Chicken Soup maker for the annual Winter Cabin Party that was held for many years in Mendon Ponds Park. I taught both the Technician and Advanced license class courses for a number of years.

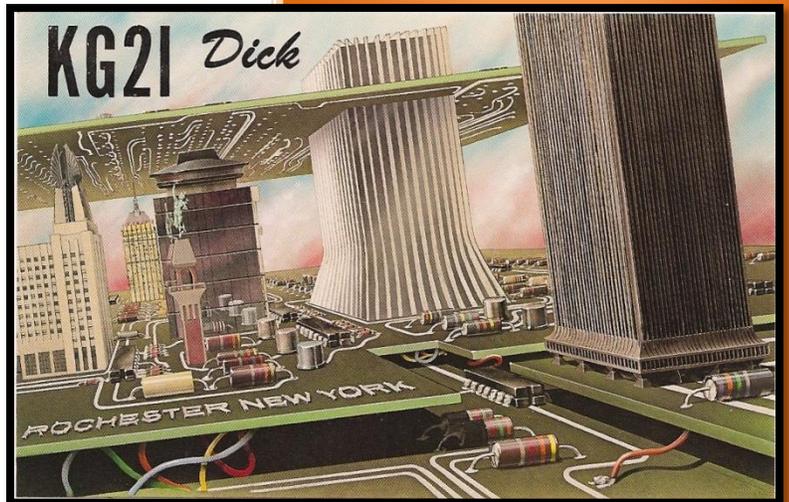
5. Did you grow up in Rochester, or are you a "transplant" ham? I was born and raised in Scotia (a suburb of Schenectady) and after getting married I moved to Rochester in 1965 to attend RIT. My wife and I have lived here ever since.

6. What is your career? Does it involve radio/technology? Suppressing my interest in Electronics, I was a Professional Photographer from 1960 until 1976. I did all kinds of Commercial Photography including making a 30-minute motion picture about the inner working of Blasius Industries, a company with branches around the U.S. including two here in Rochester. During that same time I was also a builder of Heathkits so I started shopping on Jefferson Road at the Heathkit store. In 1976 they made me an offer I couldn't refuse and that started my second career. I was at Heathkit until we closed the doors in 1992. After that I was the Service Manager for Entre Computers for a year. During that time I was also working as a consultant for my current employer. In 1993 I joined Quality Protection Systems, Inc. full time.

At that same time another Ham asked me if I could help fix some radios for a local Drag Strip in Leicester, NY. I went down and after fixing the radios I was offered a job working there on weekends. I worked up through the ranks and in 1996 I became the Starter for the track. For those who don't know drag racing, the starter is the crazy nut that stands in the center of the track between two racecars and pushes the button to start the race. This spring will mark my 20th year at the track.

7. What modes/activities haven't you tried yet, which you would like to? I haven't tried APRS or the digital modes and I think that would be fun.

8. Tell us about your QSL card. My QSL card is one of the Rochester Skyline images that RARA had made many years ago.



Vintage QSL card of Dick Goslee, KG2I

9. Other hobbies/activities? For many years I was an active Competitive Pistol shooter. I, along with another former RARA President, Art DeBruycker, W2YGW (SK) were members of the New York State Pistol Team. We competed in matches around the Northeast area and also the National Championships at Camp Perry, Ohio each year. In addition I was selected to be a member of the International Pistol Team representing the United States during the Pre-Olympic matches held in Montreal in 1975. We shot against teams from Canada and Mexico. I just missed the Bronze medal in Rapid Fire by one point. It was great to compete against the other countries.

I also like to Hunt and Fish when the time is available but with two jobs time is short. Lately my wife Sue, N2HKA and I have been traveling around the world. We have done Europe, a cruise of the Mediterranean and a number of cruises around the Caribbean. Our next cruise will be around the Greek Isles next year.

10. Family overview: My wife of 45 years is Sue, N2HKA. We have two Daughters, Karen, KB2CHE, and Cathie, KB2ESZ.

11. What repeaters do you frequent? For years I served on the BoD of the 146.79 repeater and that was my favorite hangout. I am not as active now so I don't really have one I can say I frequent on regular basis.

12. Any other info you'd like to share? It has been my pleasure to have worked at the various positions I have held in RARA for these many years. It has always been my opinion that you get out of an organization what you put in to it. I have made many friends in RARA and I will always remember these fun times. As I approach my 70th birthday (next April) I think staying busy is what helps me feel young.



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A special note from Ken Hall:

I would like to speak with the gentleman from Rush, who called concerning your Windsor chair. I misplaced the telephone number and email that was given to me, and would like to return your call. Thanks, Ken.

Public Service Events: A 2010 Recap

By Duane Fregoe, K2SI
RARA Public Service Coordinator

Public Service for 2010 is now complete. Many thanks to all that captained an event for the hours spent in meetings, making phone calls, and sending emails. Public Service is only successful due to all the volunteers that gave of their time to participate and assist an organization that needed our talents.

I have put together a recap of the events that we participated in for 2010. It notes the number of hams that participated in the event and the total ham man hours expended for the event. If a ham worked an event over multiple days it count as one in the ham count but the man hours would be cumulative over the entire event for that person.

EVENT	# of HAMS	MAN-HOURS
Tour de Cure	42	378
Genesee Valley Hunt Horse Trials	10	75
MS Bike Ride (Support Role)	8	72
Walnut Hill Farm Driving Competition	21	182
AIDS Rochester Red Ribbon Ride	15	135
Rochester Marathon	20	140
Barktoberfest	20	100
Fairport Lift Bridge Regatta	4	24
Jamboree on the Air	8	80
NYS Thruway Pumpkin Patrol	30	255
TOTAL	178	1441

For a comparison:

In 2008 we had 14 events with 181 hams for a total of 1,407 man-hours.

In 2009 we had 12 events with 182 hams for a total of 1,475 hours.

For the past three years I have been the Public Service Coordinator and it has been an enjoyable experience. The time has come for me to step down and reallocate my time to other ham radio and club activities. I enjoy working with the new hams and showing them the possibilities available to them. The hope is they will stay active in this wonderful hobby and want to upgrade their ham license. The RARA Academy is a first attempt at this end result.

RaRa Club LOGO Items



Don't feel left out- get your RaRa logo items today!

<http://www.rochesterham.org/logo.htm>

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Raffle Prizes!

By Dan & Sue Waterstraat, W2DEW & KC2SUE,
Awards Chairpersons

We're starting the new year off with a bang! Our first prize is a longwave/AM/shortwave/aircraft, and FM receiver with SSB! This is the Buzz Aldrin Edition of the popular Grundig Model G6 radio. It is a portable radio about half the size of a paperback book.

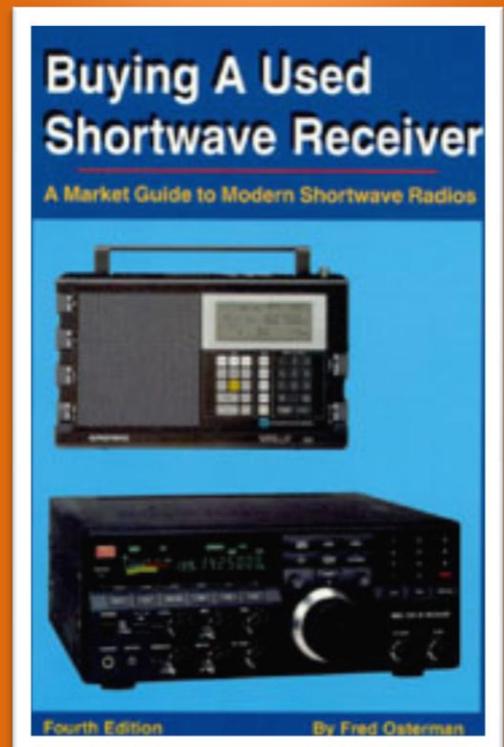
Here are just some of the features: 150-29999 kHz, dual conversion, digital tuning (fast & slow on CW-SSB), 700 memories, lighted dial, and many more. I was able to pick up many CW and SSB signals on the 80, 40, 20, and 17 meter Ham bands on this handy set. This item includes radio, carrying case, AC adapter, batteries, manual, and even an Apollo jacket patch.

Our second prize will keep all your fasteners tight around the shack and home. This is a Klein, made in USA, 10-in-1 Screwdriver. It has two flat blade, two Philips, two torx, two square, and two nutdriver bits all in one tool. Great for your Emcomm go kit, too.

In our bookshelf department, we have *Buying a Used Shortwave Receiver* by Fred Osterman of Universal Radio. This book covers what to look for in a used shortwave receiver and has specs and ratings on 100 of the most commonly available shortwave radios.

Maybe it will be warmer in January, you never know. Defrost your car, shovel off the snow and come on out to the January meeting. And don't forget some raffle tickets to get a crack at the Buzz Aldrin Radio and other prizes.

73, Dan & Sue.



Picture Puzzler

By Kevin Carey, WB2QMY

Welcome to another *Picture Puzzler* column! Last month we featured a mystery photo of a device with a frequency dial ranging from 200 to 400 kHz with the marking "TWR" at 278 kHz (you can see December's issue in the archives at www.rochesterham.org). **George Masny (KA2GPJ)**, **Don Hammond (AC2CC)**, and **Peter Yonge (W2ARK)** all correctly identified this receiver as a post-war longwave receiver used in the early "A/N Radio Range" navigation system. All were also aware that "TWR" on the dial stood for "Tower" and indicated the standard tower frequency used in those days. From the detailed answers I received, I have a hunch that each of these gentlemen may have some experience in aviation!

Our mystery photo for this month is pictured below. Guess what this item is, and what ham event it would have been used for during two consecutive weekends in December 2010. Send your guesses to me at Editor@RochesterHam.org for recognition in the February issue of the *RARA Rag*.



Mystery Photo: Be the first to guess what this is, and what event it was recently used for, and be recognized in the next RARA Rag!

Another RARA Academy: Join Us!

Duane Fregoe, K2SI

RARA Academy #2 is being planned for February 12, 2011. For this Academy there will be a presentation on APRS. Automatic Packet Reporting System is widely used in many of our public service events to locate vehicles during the event. The presentation will show what is required and how easy it is to set up a radio for APRS. Another presentation will be on Echolink. Echolink is another VOIP form of communication for the amateur radio community. Echolink is run on your computer, iPhone, iPod touch, or any android phone. The final presentation will be on 6 meter operation. 6 meters can be a lot of fun when the band is open and a technician license is good for full access. The Academy will be at RIT and start at 9:00AM. Fliers will be going out in January with all the details.

FOR SALE: Icom IC-746 with PS-125 Power Supply. \$1050. Contact Howard, K2AN at (585) 237-2563

HAMFEST TRAVEL: Will share trip expenses to Dayton Hamfest. Contact Jay, KC2YST at jgolden577@rochester.rr.com

*RARA Academies offer hands on, practical information you can use right away!
(Photo Courtesy of Anmari Linardi, N2YGG)*



QRP...My Granny Caught a Flea

By Bill Hopkins, AA2YV

About eight years ago I repaired the onboard computer in my 90's something Chevy but spent beaucoup hours at the Rundell Library to get myself up to speed. Today I don't even change the oil. Ted and Igor have taken over. Could I do it all myself? Yeah, but with too much of a learning curve, money and soreness.

So, anybody built a 100-watt, all band, all mode solid state, surface mount, phase lock loop, DSP loaded, with pan-adapter and built-in ATU HF-6 Meter rig lately? Didn't think so. But if you want to, there's a good book somewhere out there to take you through most stages and steps of this technology. Good luck!

Enter QRP, *i.e.*, LOW power, or even lower at QRPP (all starting at 10 watts and going down, down, down). (Polite laughter is heard in the background.) If you just chuckled, well, my heart goes out to you. You know, surely, that several of your SSB QSOs and not a few CW interchanges have been with QRP OM's and YLs. They just didn't tell you. Of course, with QRP you could be mooching off someone else's 80-foot high Yagi, high power and good receiver. But that's the game, my friend.

One thing is certain: If we were right now at the top of our sunspot game, QRP would be just another option. Big guns would pull out that mobile 10-meter SSB rig and crank down the power for that Tasmanian QSO; it's kind of fun.

So why QRP when we're still coming out of the sunspot nadir? Let me explain: If you don't know in general how to chase DX, then you will probably find it challenging to make those long hop QSOs on low power. (And if you do, just don't announce your call as stroke-QRP.) But wait! With QRP, chances are, my signal is reaching the other guy. When I get on a DX contest, SSB or CW – not to mention PSK31 – EVERYBODY hears me. Gee, that's strange. The S-meter factor is quite simple. If you have to push a lot more power to raise the needle at the other end, then it follows that you can drop the needle over there, by lowering your power here, and still be heard. (Let's see how well the other guy knows the knobs on his new fangled rig.) Where stateside stations turn up their noses at lighter signals, DX stations typically don't. So, have at it.

The BIG REASON for doing QRP lies at the foundation of Ham Radio, from way back. It's called: "Build it, and they will come." Build to learn, Build it easy. Today build it kit-wise. Build twice and QSO once. If you build a kit, as Jerry Svoboda (KB2QIU) says, you can learn only so much, and he's right. Deeper learning comes with trial and error, assembling junkbox parts on the bench (even "ugly" construction and Manhattan style). Stay solid state or go retro with tubes. And yet, by building a QRP kit or two, you will find out a Hertz-of-a-lot. For one, you will begin to see how the major circuits of a receiver or transmitter line up; even a broadband inductor in the transmitter final will tickle your curiosity: How exactly does that work? And, you'll find out that in the RF section, a poor solder job that may seem OK won't make the cut. Finally, when you align and tune up the little rig, you'll find out there's more than one way to skin a cat. (No insult intended to the cat's whisker crystal set guys.)



You can believe it that I have too many QRP rigs huffing and puffing about my house. Since I believe that rigs deserve to be operated, I always have three low power toys hooked up in my shack. Right now they are my homebrew Sierra Norcal (SN), the surprising Heathkit HW-9 and my Elecraft K-1. (I recently built a Ramsey 40-meter Amp at 10W to go with my SN, but I felt guilty and unhooked it.) The other piggies are sleeping in the basement.

You should know that we don't presently have a QRP club in Rochester, but many other areas do sport their interest groups. Not to worry. With the Internet – and the airwaves – you are immediately hooked up. Get on the non-contest-contest of NAQCC (Google it) for two hours each month and meet great YLs and OMs. Join NAQCC for free (I'm number 1144). Join the ARCI and get their great magazine (I'm number 11896), at QRPARCI-dot-com. Join the brand new QRP-dot-com forum. Look at all the cool things you can build by going on the web (*i.e.*, w0itp.com; norcalqrp.org; newenglandqrp.org; amqrp.org; nogaqrp.org). Or, can piggies really fly? Well, check this out: fpqrp.com.

So, let's get you started! Find a kitted rig you like. May I suggest a single-band CW rig from Dave Benson's SW-Series at \$55? Or his "Retro" AM-75M rig at \$69. You choose your band (smallwonderlabs.com). Or, you may want to try Hendricks QRP Kits (qrpkits.com), or a host of others. Keep it cheap! Scrounge your own enclosure.

QRP Equipment: Foreground, left to right, is the ZM-2 Z-match tuner and an older 80-meter crystal controlled transmitter (approx. 2.5 watts output).

Rear, left to right: the Elecraft K-1, my 2nd homebrew Sierra Norcal (including the enclosure), then Dave Benson's Small Wonder Labs 20-meter PSK31 transceiver

Then, do the smart thing: build a Z-match tuner. Roll your own (see the website at: <http://users.tpg.com.au/users/ldbutler/SingleCoilZMatch.htm>), or, easier yet, buy a kit, such as the ZM-2 tuner from: emtech.steadynet.com. Then again, maybe Hendricks' BLT Balanced Line Tuner Plus would be just your thing. Remember, low power use only on this stuff!

So, at last, when you build a rig and find scads of QRPers on the band, you will want to *turn to antennas* and see maybe how you can get on 80 meters or improve what you've got for QRP and QRO. Check out the "fake" 80-meter end-fed Zepp for low power! It uses coax feedline and a simple tank coil setup at the antenna for impedance matching. You'll find it at AA5TB's website: aa5tb.com/efha.html. Be sure to use low power only! It really works. Mine is up permanently at a 1.3:1 SWR on 3.555 MHz, and the 140-foot long antenna curves around the back yard. (Be sure to use the 7-foot counterpoise.) *Have at it, my friends, and ENJOY QRP!*

Between the Ham Bands

Jay Golden, KC2YST

SWLing has been a hobby of mine for many years and remains so after becoming a ham, and I know other hams enjoy surfing the non-ham bands for interesting DX. The inclusion of general coverage capability on contemporary transceivers has made possible new opportunities for hams to hear distant stations with the simplest of antennas.

As you'd expect, the laws of propagation apply to SWLing the same as to amateur work: higher frequencies in daylight, lower frequencies at night, and the grey line has the same significance. Solar activity certainly affects reception of distant signals for SWLs and hams alike. And seasonal changes have the same impacts. So what's different? Since it's not necessary to have lots of power, the real difference is that SWLing isn't necessarily dependent on an impedance match between your receiver and antenna – just turn up the gain.

My earliest QSLs came from now-defunct stations like Radio Brazzaville, Radio Andorra, and Radio La Voz de la Libertad, to name just three. NNNOICE ("on the ice" was their slogan) was an exciting catch, but now is history. My first radio was a Philco multibander in a wooden cabinet that required two of us to lug up to my bedroom. I collected over a hundred QSLs and used many different receivers (SX-190, R4C, RA17L, R390A, 51J4, R7A) in the years that followed. I still belong to the same SWL club I joined over thirty years ago, and receive its weekly email "flashsheet" with the very latest and hottest loggings.

These days, the 90, 75 and 60 meter bands (the Tropical bands) are mostly dead if you live in an urban area infested with QRM; too bad, because those bands are the home of small – read 1 kW or less – broadcasters in Latin America and Indonesia, the true DX catches. But the 49, 41, 31, 25, and 19 meter bands offer African, European, and Asian broadcasters galore, as well as the big national broadcasters in South America. The exciting but difficult catch on November 15 has been Radio St. Helena (ZD7RSD), broadcasting with 1kw on 11092.5 kHz (see QSL image).

There are also utility stations, called "utes" by SWLs, which typically operate in upper sideband mode. Air traffic controllers are usually heard evenings between 8.8 and 9.0 MHz working flights over the Atlantic, and the



Prized QSL card from Radio St. Helena, 11092.5 kHz

controllers in Africa, Iceland, Scotland and the Azores are heard on those frequencies as well; at sunrise it is possible to copy the controllers on 6673 kHz working Asian and Pacific traffic. During hurricane season the hurricane hunter aircraft and others are active 24 hours a day on various HF frequencies. 11175 kHz is an active frequency for USAF comms, and in upstate New York it is easy to copy their comms with aircraft and the old Ramey AFB in Puerto Rico. The Coast Guard CAMSLANT station in Virginia is always busy with traffic for cutters and ships in distress, typically on 5696 kHz.

Resources for SWLing are varied. The World Radio-TV Handbook (“WRTH”) is the SWL’s bible, packed with information about broadcasters arranged by country, frequency, and transmission times in GMT as well as mailing addresses, websites, and e-mail addresses. There are also clubs that offer logging information.

Did You Know?

Did you know that your club’s website at www.rochesterham.org offers these features and more?...

- ✓ Photos of meetings & events (you might be in there!)
- ✓ Info on upcoming meetings/programs
- ✓ 2011 Hamfest information!
- ✓ Online membership & renewal
- ✓ Public service info & sign-up
- ✓ VE testing info
- ✓ Back issues of the *Rag* in PDF
- ✓ Officer contact info
- ✓ List of past presidents (how many do you remember?)
- ✓ Order RARA logo products (hats, shirts, mugs)
- ✓ Useful Internet links
- ✓ Ham Radio 101—tons of tutorial info, plus net & repeater listings

Rochester Amateur Radio Association, Inc.





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Rochester Hamfest

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Memorial Scholarship

Membership

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Welcome to RARA

The **Rochester Amateur Radio Association, Inc. (RARA)** is a widely diversified, highly active amateur radio club centered in the Rochester, NY area. We were founded in 1930, and incorporated in September of 1960. Currently with over 575 active members, we are one of the largest Amateur Radio clubs in North America, attracting international members from near and far.

We are an American Radio Relay League (ARRL) affiliated club since 1931, and a charter Special Service Organization. **RARA** provides a unifying focal point for much of the amateur radio activity in Western New York.

New at RARA on the web:

- RARA Academy - Download the flyer and RSVP TODAY!
- New: Updated Rochester area Repeater Listing
- Fall program listing updated.
- Fall Licensing courses - Register now!
- Newest photo gallery posted. Have some fun: Make your own comments and captions!

Your First Scanner

Jim Sutton, N2OPS

Remember when we went to Lafayette near Bull's Head for our electronics stuff? In those days, everything was in the VHF high band (150-174 MHz) and all we had to do was tune across the dial to find our police and fire calls. Well, those days are long gone. Now to listen to our local agencies we often need digital capability, trunking capability or both.

SCANNER BANDS

To hear law enforcement agencies in Monroe County your scanner must be capable of receiving P25 digital signals. For all Genesee County agencies trunk tracking capability is needed to follow the conversations.

Most modern scanners cover the three basic scanner bands:

10-meter ham band	28-29.7 MHz
Low band	29.7-50 MHz
6-meter ham band	50-54 MHz
2-meter ham band	144-148 MHz
Federal	137-144 MHz
High band	148-174 MHz
Federal	406-420 MHz
70 cm ham band	420-450 MHz
UHF band	450-470 MHz

Most scanners cover the following bands:

Civilian aircraft	108-137 MHz
800/900 MHz band	806-956 MHz

A few scanners also cover these bands:

Upper HF/CB	25-28 MHz
1.25 cm ham band	220-225 MHz
Military Aircraft	225-370 MHz
700 MHz public safety	370-406 MHz
23 cm ham band	1240-130 MHz

Many scanner listeners are interested in police calls. In Monroe County these transmissions are in the UHF band and use the P25 digital protocol. Beyond Monroe County, all law enforcement agencies use the analog mode. In Genesee County they are 800 MHz and trunked. Orleans County 800 MHz cannot be followed by trunk tracking scanners, but can be heard in analog mode. State Police and all law enforcement in surrounding county frequencies are on VHF high band.

Fire calls in Monroe County and Rochester are on VHF high band. All surrounding counties dispatch on low band, and all but Genesee and Orleans conduct their communications on low band.

EMS dispatching usually takes place on the county fire channels. In the City of Rochester and some suburbs EMS is provided by Monroe and Rural Metro commercial ambulance. Often, where EMS is a separate entity from the fire department, dispatching is done on a dedicated frequency.



Lafayette tunable VHF-Hi band monitor receiver, an early predecessor to modern scanners

Many additional communications can be found in all of the major VHF/UHF bands: Highway departments, institutions, businesses, marine, railroads, aviation, etc.

SCANNER FEATURES

Number of Channels

Don't be intimidated by this feature. Just as we wouldn't turn down a vehicle purchase because we'll never drive as fast as the vehicle is capable of going, we might be surprised at how quickly we can fill the channels. In a future story we will look at filling the channels.

Banks

This feature allows you to divide frequencies by service, area, situation, etc.

Search

In spite of the many sources of frequency information there are always new frequencies to be found. You can set your own frequency ranges and often frequency steps. Some scanners even have a service search function which allows you to search by services such as police, fire, marine, aircraft, etc.

CTCSS/DCS Tone Squelch

Tone squelch allows you to filter out all unwanted signals on the various frequencies. In signal-saturated areas this is a must. Nearly all business frequencies are occupied by multiple users making tone squelch a must.

Signal Stalker

This feature allows you to capture the frequency of a nearby transmitter. This is very useful at special events where you can see a radio in use, but you don't know the frequency.

Attenuator

The attenuator helps eliminate interference on select frequencies. Be sure the attenuator can be assigned to select channels rather than all or none.

Power

Avoid sealed battery packs on handhelds. Loose batteries allow you to still listen when circumstances do not permit recharging. And loose batteries will cost less to replace than a sealed battery pack.

Reviews

The website at www.eham.net/reviews/ has reviews for 142 different scanners. Another source of information on which scanner to buy is Radio Reference at:

http://wiki.radioreference.com/index.php/Category:Radio_Models.

Programming Software

Programming software is a must for programming a high end scanner. I recommend Butel scanner programming software. It is both a good buy and easier to use than other scanner software. <http://www.butel.nl/>

How Much?

Basic analog base and handheld scanners start at around \$100. Scanners with CTCSS/DCS cost around \$200. Analog trunk tracker scanners go for around \$200. P25 digital capability will cost around \$500.



An early Bearcat, crystal-controlled scanner

Where To Buy

I highly recommend Sparky's Autosound at 301 Lyell Avenue in Rochester. Rich Ardilio has served the scanner needs of area people for decades and has digital scanners in stock. <http://www.sparkysautosound.com/>

Another excellent local source for scanners is G&G Communications in LeRoy. www.gcomradio.com/ Gerry is a master scanner repairman servicing scanner owners around the world. Spend some time on the site to see the many parts and other items available. Be sure to tell him: "Jim said you should get your ham license."

Of course Radio Shack stores carry scanners, but you will be basically on your own to make the right selection. Watch for sales and coupons. The Radio Shack website features refurbished scanners at reduced prices (www.radioshack.com/family/index.jsp?s=null&categoryId=2032072&pg=1). The site includes customer reviews.

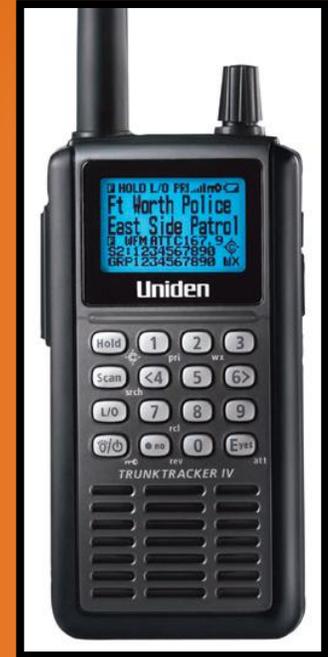
The online auction site eBay has many scanners to choose from. Read the return policy carefully and check customer feedback on any seller you wish to purchase from. All too often eBay buyers spend as much or more than they would have spent locally.

Most amateur radio suppliers also carry scanners. Be sure to check their websites.

Coming Up

In future issues we will look at local frequencies, how to find frequency information, antennas, scanning with your ham radio, filling all those channels and neat stuff to enhance your scanner listening.

Please email me any questions or suggestions jim@n2ops.net. Until next time, 73 to thee.



***Modern Trunk Tracking
portable scanner***

Monroe County ARES / RACES News

By Jim DiTucci, N2IXD

Monroe County Amateur Radio Emergency Service, Inc. holds its meetings on the fourth Thursday of each month.

The next ARES Meeting will be held on: **Thursday, January 27th, 2011, at 7:00 PM**

Meetings are held at the **Greater Rochester Chapter of the American Red Cross HQ, 50 Prince Street, Rochester, NY 14607.** (Behind the Rochester Auditorium Theatre, 885 Main St. East)

ARES NET: Monroe County ARES/RACES meets on the air every Thursday of the month at 9:00 pm, on the 146.61 MHz. (-) 110.9 Hz pl repeater. The exception to that is on nights when we hold our regular meeting, generally the 4th Thursday of the month.

See our website for more information:

<http://www.monroecountymcomm.org/>.



Morse Code Video

Interested in how Morse Code used to be taught in the U.S. Army? Check out the interesting video at:

<http://tinyurl.com/264lf7g> —Tnx Jim Hastings, W2RFM



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RaRa Rag 20 Years Ago, January 1991

By Ed Gable, K2MP
RaRa Historian



The January 4, 1991, meeting featured Mr. Ev Tupis, WB2ELB, speaking on the upcoming ARRL VHF Sweepstakes contest. Ev promised to give some hints on improving your score and how to help the local club contest scores. At this time the RaRa meeting venue was the 40 & 8 Club on University Avenue. Big news this month was the long awaited announcement by the FCC, PR Docket 90-55, which established the first codeless class of amateur radio license. The code free status was applied to new Technician Licenses and gave privileges above 30 MHz. For all other amateur classes with HF privileges the code requirement was retained.

Bob Fortman, WE2T, writing for the RDXA announced their meeting to be geared to the new DXer with tips on operating, QSLing and other DXCC topics. News from Rochester's well known Strong Museum is not normally seen within the pages of the RaRa Rag, but this issue told of a new major exhibit called *Radio Daze*. The development of radio technology and its impact on a struggling society during the Great Depression was the theme of the exhibit and was planned to last for fifteen months. The local AWA Museum had many items on loan to the Strong Museum for this exhibition.

Ed Gable, K2MP, Chairman of RaRa's Code and Theory Classes wrote to report that there were 20 new Novices and 18 new Tech/General licensees as a result of the fall class. This fine success was saddened by the death of both CW trainers during the class with the loss of Bud Young WA2UGE and Bob Phillips W2DHV. The void was filled when Dave Bernheisel, N2DPF, and Brad Allen, KB2CHY, volunteered to step in and do what needed to be done. With regret it was reported that Donald J. Hassett KD2IC and Walter J. Malone W2PZH, were reported as Silent Keys. From the Want Ads you could buy Drake R4A and T-4X with power supply, from Gene, W2LU, for \$400.00. A new advertiser was Martin Ippolito, N2HEG, Master Electrician and purveyor of Burglar Alarm Systems.

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THE RARA RAG

PUBLISHED BY
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Webmaster Frank Schramm, WB2PYD

RaRa meets on the first Friday of each month from September through May. Come join us at:

Henrietta Fire Company No.1
3129 East Henrietta Rd.
Henrietta, NY 14467

[Get Directions](#)

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Drumlins Amateur Radio Club Ltd. (DARC)

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February Rag Deadline
January 17, 2011

