

HAM RAG

Rockford Amateur Radio Association, Inc.

Visit our website for more club and area ham information
in the Rockford area at <http://rara.tripod.com>

July 2003

The Storm and The Aftermath

This is for the Hams that appear to have gone unnoticed, or a least by the local media, city and county officials.

To the Hams that not only lost propriety, antennas, trees to hang antenna's, the cost of gas that go into the generators, and for hardships that this hiccup of nature has caused.

To the Hams that not only endured the hardships to themselves but helped their fellow neighbors to get though this ordeal by providing power from their own generators to power refrigerators and freezers.

To the Hams that put in countless hours weather spotting, running the EOC, providing communications where needed, the Hams of Stevenson County that provided damage assessments for the Red Cross and finally to all the hams not mentioned in this short essay.

A BIG THANK YOU.



New Meeting Location

Due to construction, the regular monthly meeting till further notice has been moved to:

*Saint Anthony Medical Center
5666 E. State Street Rockford, IL.*

The July meeting is still at
7:00 pm July 11, 2003

The program for the July meeting will be

R. Patrick Ryan, KC9VVT
Emergency Coordinator for the Illinois
Section

To get to the meeting room go to the main entrance - turn right at desk - go to the end of hall to the meeting rooms.

Up Coming and Ongoing Project's

On The Waterfront - John Birly, AA9SK
Truck Project - Herb Eckstein, W9AMJ
ARES - Sue Peters, KA9GNR

Please offer to volunteer your services where you can. For they always need or going to need help for Events and Projects.

Did you know?

SKYWARN is a concept developed in the early 1970s that was intended to promote a cooperative effort between the National Weather Service and communities. The emphasis of the effort is often focused on the storm spotter, an individual who takes a position near their community and reports wind gusts, hail size, rainfall, and cloud formations that could signal a developing tornado. Another part of SKYWARN is the receipt and effective distribution of National Weather Service information.

Presidents Log – July 2003

This months log starts with a belated Happy Fourth of July, I hope everyone had a safe holiday.

I would like to thank all the people that helped with field day the weekend of June 28th, we all had a good time and made lots of contacts. We also faced a challenge on Saturday afternoon; we had a severe fast moving storm come through Rockford with 60 MPH winds and heavy rains. All radio tents survived the heavy winds and with John and Janelle Birly standing inside the food tent they were able to save the tent and food. We had many visitors during the two days of operations and interviews from Channel 17 and 23.

Our presentation this month will be R. Patrick Ryan, KC9VVT; Pat is the Section Emergency Coordinator for the Illinois Section. He will be talking about Amateur Radio Emergency Services, ARES, and the state of Emergency Communications. Pat is also asking if you have an appointed ARRL position please wear your name badge. Also, if there is any presentations you would like to see at the meetings, please let one of your officers or board members know and we will make sure the program is presented.

HELP!!! We are looking for your help with some up coming projects, John Birly, AA9SK, is the On The Waterfront Chairman and I know he will be looking for some help, please let John know if you can help out. As you are all aware, the Waterfront Ticket Booth is our largest fundraiser; in the last two years RARA has raised \$3000.00. John will be contacting every member of RARA to schedule coverage for the ticket booth. Also Herb, K9AMJ, is the chairman of the truck committee and is looking for help in working on the truck; if you are inter-

ested in working with Herb on this project please let him know.

I would like everyone to keep in mind the new Emergency Coordinator (EC) for Winnebago County, Sue Peters, KA9GNR, is a member of RARA and would invite all members to work with her and help with any and all events, emergency or community service.

If you know of any hams that are not members of RARA or some of the members that have not been to a meeting in a while, please invite them to our next meeting.

As always, your comments and/or suggestions are always welcome, your officers and board members are here to serve you.

73, and see you at the meeting.

Scott, KB9YRW

The monthly Board of Directors Meeting are held at Saint Anthony Medical Center 5666 E. State St. Rockford, IL on the last Tuesday of each month at 7:00 PM.

RARA Officers for 2003

President: Scott Allshouse KB9YRW
Vice President: John Auerswald KA9SOG
Secretary: Wendy Owano KC9BCF
Treasurer: Rich Ludwig K9PK
Director: Shari Harlan N9SH
Director: Joe Roling N9HEZ
Director: John Birly AA9SK
Director: Larry Snyder K0HNM
Newsletter and Web Site:
John Auerswald KA9SOG

RARA-ATV Update

Want to get on ATV? We are getting closer to getting the repeater on air the we have our new call as W9ATN. We now also have most of the key components needed to start testing. The repeater will have an input of 1253 Mhz and an output of 421.25 Mhz (channel 57 on a cable ready tv). In the future we are planning to put in 1.2 Ghz to 2.4 Ghz links to widen the receive range beyond the Rockford area to better serve surrounding communities. This may help in keep the costs down and allowing more amateurs wanting to get into ATV to do so.

To achieve the initial money for the start up costs, dues have been set at \$50.

The dues go totally to the ATV fund and you will become a member of ATN-Illinois. The money DOES NOT count towards any regular RARA membership dues. Money will be kept separate from any other RARA fund by the RARA-ATV account. We hope that regular members will continue to support RARA in their normal fashion. It may well be that after a couple of years at \$50, that we will be in a maintenance mode and will be able to reduce the ATN dues. That will be up to you, the membership of ATN.

So, if you would like to join the RARA-ATV/ATN-Illinois please make the check out to RARA-ATV and send to:

Gene Harlan
5931 Alma Dr.
Rockford, IL 61108

Thanks for your support of ATN-Illinois and RARA-ATV.

Contact John at ka9sog@arrl.net or Gene at atvq@hampubs.com for any questions about RARA-ATV.

SUNSPOT WATCH: MAJOR EVENT HITS ON FIELD DAY WEEKEND

Wonder why some the ham bands sounded dead on Field Day weekend. Especially on Sunday June 29th. Well the answer may be a single sunspot. Here's the story.

According to spaceweather.com, early in June a large sunspot or active region crossed the Earth-facing side of the sun and unleashed several powerful solar flares. For the past two weeks it has been out of sight on the far side of our star, but now it is back.

The sunspot reappeared Field Day weekend near the sun's northeastern limb. The active region, which is about 10 times wider than our Earth is still an impressive sight through properly-filtered telescopes. But this kind of beauty comes with an important warning. Never look at the sun directly with your naked eye or through unfiltered instrument such as a telescope or binoculars. Bright sunlight, especially when focused through a telescope, is a sure way to damage your eyes.

A much safer way to see it is to visit space-weather.com. Go there to find safe solar observing tips and to recent images of this emerging active area of our Sun. ARNewsline



Sunspot AR375 that caused the poor band conditions during Field Day.

**Rockford Amateur Radio Association
Monthly meeting of the membership**

June 13, 2003

St. Anthony Hospital

RARA President Scott Allshouse, KB9YRW, called the meeting to order at 7:12 pm.

Minutes: The minutes from the May meeting were read by Secretary Wendy Owano, KC9BCF. The motion to accept the minutes as read was made by Shari Harlan, N9SH, second by Carl Cacciatore, W9TQ, and the motion carried by voice vote.

Treasurer's Report: Treasurer Rich Ludwig, K9PK, reported a balance of \$4337.22 as of May 27, 2003, a **net loss** of \$217.53. Carl Cacciatore moved to accept the report as presented, second by Larry Snyder, K0HNM, and the motion was carried by voice vote.

Old Business: The board has decided to cancel Breakfast in the Park on Saturday, June 28, the beginning of Field Day due to a lack of participation and funds.

Truck Committee: Bob Davidson, WA9NTT, reported that the club truck now has the decals on the sides. The truck was on display for club members the night of the meeting.

Field Day: Shari Harlan will send a press release for Field Day to the media on Monday, June 16. She will also ask the city of Rockford for a proclamation for the Field Day event.

New Business: Gene Harlan, WB9MMM, updated the meeting members about the RARA-ATV group. Almost all of the parts have been acquired for the ATV repeater. A license has been applied for asking for the call of W9ATN for the ATV repeater.

Mark Broman, N9CNW, awarded patches to the hams that helped at the Boy Scout Triple P event.

Eric Radmacher, KC9AVP, mentioned that a Yahoo group by the name of SWANI is a clearinghouse for events that are in need of help from ham operators.

Scott informed everyone who is familiar with Bob Smith, N9FCN that he was in the hospital in Madison. Contact Scott as he has the mailing address for Bob.

OTW: The club's booth location remains the same for On the Waterfront. This area is now the Ethnic Village, not the Jazz stage. There is supervisor training on August 7.

The next Technician Class will be held October 4 and 11; the General Class will be held November 11 and 18. Both classes are at the RVC Bell School building.

Shari Harlan moved to adjourn the meeting, second by Nicholas Lager, KB9SKW, motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,

Wendy Owano, RARA Secretary

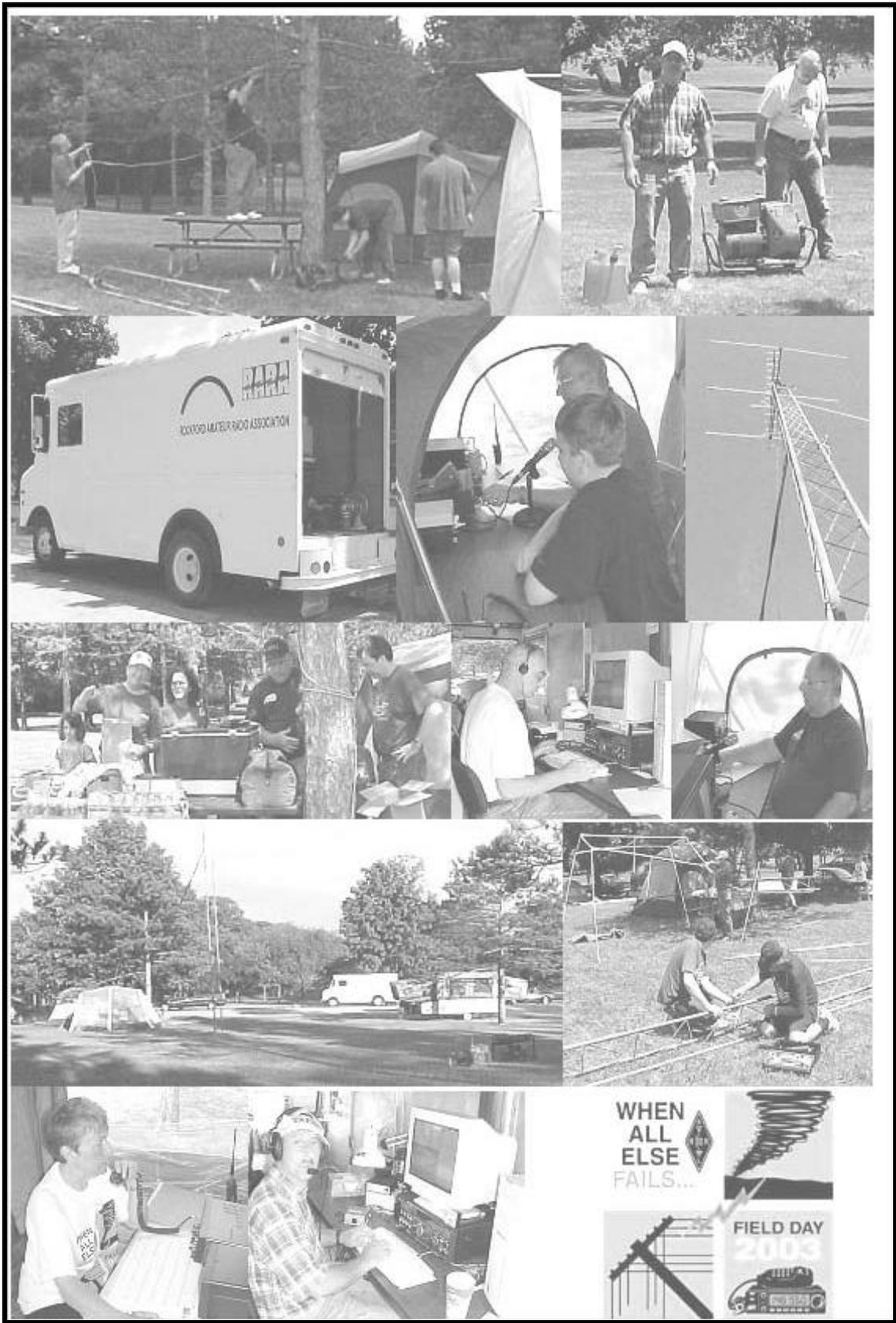


What is ARES?

The Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES) consists of licensed amateurs who have voluntarily registered their qualifications and equipment for communications duty in the public service when disaster strikes.

Every licensed amateur, regardless of membership in ARRL or any other local or national organization, is eligible for membership in the ARES. The only qualification, other than possession of an Amateur Radio license, is a sincere desire to serve. Because ARES is an amateur service, only amateurs are eligible for membership. The possession of emergency-powered equipment is desirable, but is not a requirement for membership.





If It's Not a Contest, Then What Is It?

Ah, Field Day. It isn't supposed to be a contest, but how many of us got launched into this great sub-species of ham radio called "contesting" by learning at the elbow of a somewhat intimidating master operator in the (pick a band) meter tent working (pick a mode)? Remember that feeling of terror and exhilaration when after hours of watching he handed you the mike, key, or keyboard and said, "Here, take it for a while"? You...an instant band master!

Field Day was originally envisioned as an emergency test and training opportunity. That aspect lives on in the sheer process of collecting, hauling, installing, and activating tons of radio equipment and antenna hardware. Recent years have seen more and more class "E" emergency power stations and this year we have the new class "F" EOC stations. I took the opportunity to get our local EOC station (W7VMI) on the air for the first time. It was as much work as a "real" Field Day, pulling cables through conduit, putting up antennas, installing connectors, wondering why the radio that worked fine before didn't work now (and figuring it out), and making a few QSOs in the bargain.

What I like best, though, is that we're all equals at Field Day. Do you remember that first feeling of actually belonging and getting the hang of ham radio, even if just a little? There's nothing like that first late night bull session with the unshaven older guys drinking that muddy coffee and telling the most amazing stories while the generators putter and throb in the night and the lights in the radio tents dim in sync with each dot, dash, and syllable. In our sweaty work duds through the day and then gathered around at

night under the kitchen fly lantern wearing old camp jackets, the distinctions between OT and newcomer fray and dissolve.

This year I had a pleasant surprise that jogged me into this little reverie. While experiencing "the innate cussedness of inanimate objects" late in the afternoon, rassing yet another connector onto an obstinate cable, a young voice burst through the 2-meter rig's squelch calling, "CQ Field Day" on 146.52. I was only too happy to put the connector down and called him back. The contact was a little stiff, with some coaching audible in the background. At the end, the young man added, "And you're my first contact!" Really, I said, your very first? And so it was, my connector forgotten, as we chatted a little while. What a treat for both of us! Those are rare moments.

As I look back through my own checkered ham career of thirty two years, starting with the high school club tearing around in my back yard, the Field Day memories are strong and numerous. I remember having to pound that vertical mounting pipe all the way into the ground because we couldn't pull it out and hoping my dad wouldn't catch us. Then there was freezing in the back of a buddy's VW bug all night and working unexpected DX on 40-meters. Watching the tide come in farther - a whole lot farther - than I expected and slowly covering up the bases of that fine 40-meter vertical array. Running a phone pileup with Mt. Rainier looming across the water in the evening sunset. I'm sure you have yours, too.

Yes, the very best thing about Field Day, useful intentions aside, is connecting with each other. To let new hams join our tribe

(Continued on page 7)

THE NEXT AMATEUR RADIO EXAM SESSION IS

**9 AM SATURDAY
JUNE 21, 2003.**

**North Suburban
District Library
6340 N 2nd St.
Loves Park, IL**

Check-in is from 9AM till 11AM. We require two signature ID's (one must be a photo ID).

If you are a licensed amateur radio operator bring your original current license and a copy.

If you are using a CSCE for an element credit bring the original and a copy.

Copiers available at site. (We need to see the originals & keep a photocopy of each document used for element credit.)

The test fee for 2003 is \$12.00.
Walk-ins welcome.



In between weather events this net control operator Nicholas Lager, KB9SKW, got a short nap. But what you don't see is the two phones, a hand held and the tv remote control to keep apprised of what's going on.

(Continued from page 6)

and for the warriors to grow reacquainted once again. Life moves at such a fast pace these days, it's too easy to forget that we need to make contact, so to speak.

Suddenly, six months are past and we've only chatted with the same dozen guys on the repeater or at the meetings. I really enjoy seeing a new face join in and pull on that guy rope or a familiar old face pop through the tent flap. Sharing the work and the rewards does wonders for the ham spirit. A successful Field Day recharges our enthusiasm, widens our circle of friends, and enriches ham radio for us. It's not just about QSOs.

Given the pastoral nature of the event's name, it seems appropriate to end this ramble with a quote from Thoreau, "Some men fish their entire lives without realizing it's not fish they're after."

Field Day, at least, gives us a hint.

Editors note: This was sent to me by email so I don't know where this article originated at. But the club call is the Vashon-Maury Island Radio Club in Vashon, WA.

So after the past weeks events maybe next year will give a new meaning to Field Day. There are less than 11 months to Field Day 2004. Its time to start planning.

**Have anything or would like to
submit an article to be put in the
Ham Rag or the website?
Contact me by e-mail at
ka9sog@arrl.net and visit [http://
rara.tripod.com](http://rara.tripod.com) for any late
breaking news and information.**

**Rockford Amateur
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RETURN COMPLETED FORM TO:
ROCKFORD AMATEUR RADIO ASSOCIATION
P.O. BOX 8465
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