



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>

December 2004

2005 Membership Rates

At the October board meeting it was voted on to decrease dues with the addition of the new WA9AXD.com website and using email to send the newsletter.

New Rates as follows:

Single \$25	Family \$30
Senior \$15	Senior Family \$20
Student \$15	

Dues include receipt of Ham Rag via the clubs new internet website, <http://www.W9AXD.com>

OR

If you still want to receive the HamRag by mail and an membership you have to add \$12 dollars for the following:

Single \$37	Family \$42
Senior \$27	Senior Family \$32
Student \$27	

This will get you membership and the HamRag mail to you as it is now.

It is imperative that you get your proper email address you use to the club treasure.

**The next meeting is at
7:00 PM December 10 , 2004**

The program for this month's meeting will be:

**A Dick Fleming, KC9BCB
Production**

TBA

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

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.

RARA 2005 Officers and Directors:

President – Bill Peters, WB9MCZ
Vice President – Tim Peterson, KC9DNN
Secretary – Nicholas Lager, KB9SKW
Treasurer – Carl Cacciatore, W9TQ

Director's : Dan Hunt, KC9ATR
Gene Harlan, WB9MMM
Scott Allshouse, W9SBA
Wendy Owano, KC9BCF

Ham Rag & Web Site - TBA

This is the last HamRag you will receive that is printed and sent to you via postal mail. Unless you pay to receive it or don't have computer or E-mail access. So it is imperative to make sure that the club Treasurer has your proper E-Mail address to receive your copy of the HamRag.

SCHEDULED DXPEDITIONS By K9LJN & W9GD			
CALL-SIGN	QTH	WHEN	QSL VIA
VK9XG	CHRISTMAS IS.	NOW TO DEC. 9	W0YG
JD1/JR6TYH	MINAMI TORISHIMA	NOW TO DEC. 20	"JA" BURO
VQ9OG	CHAGOS	NOW TO DEC. 31	W9ROG
7Q7LA	MALAWI	NOW TO JAN. 10	G0IAS
T98AQL	BOSNIA	NOW TO MARCH, 2005	IZ4AQL
ZK1GND	SOUTH COOK IS.	DEC. 24 - 30	VK2GND
5T5DY	MAURITANIA	DEC. 26 TO JAN. 9	F6GDC
3Y0X	PETER 1 IS.	JAN. 24 TO FEB. 10	?????

Recently Heard/Worked DX From the Rockford Area
By K9LJN & W9GD

CALLSIGN	QTH	QSL VIA
5H3HK	TANZANIA	DIRECT
6O0X	SOMALIA	DJ6SI
6W1RY	SENEGAL	F5VHJ
A52CDX	BHUTAN	F9DK
A61AJ	UNITED ARAB EMIRATES	N4QB
A71EM	QATAR	EA7FTR
AH2R	GUAM	JH7QXJ
C91Z	MOZAMBIQUE	ZS6WPX
CN2R	MOROCCO	W7EJ
D4B	CAPE VERDE	K1BV
EZ8BO	TURKMENISTAN	DIRECT
JD1AMA	OGASAWARA IS.	DIRECT
KH0AC	MARIANA IS.	K7ZA
ST2T	SUDAN	S57DX
SU9NC	EGYPT	OM2SA
TF3W	ICELAND	TF3IRA
V63DX	MICRONESIA	JA7HMZ
VK9XD	CHRISTMAS IS.	VK2CZ
XU7ADF	CAMBODIA	AA4XR
XX9C	MACAO	XX9BB
YJ0AC	VANUATU	IK3GES

Operating Tips

Do you have any items in your shack that slide around on your operating table and the problem only seems to get worse after dust accumulates under the equipment's rubber/plastic feet?

I have good news for you! In most cases, the solution is simply to use the same thin rubber material your XYL (wife) puts on kitchen cabinet shelves underneath your radio equipment to keep it from sliding around. It is easily cut to size using a scissors, cheap (economically priced), readily available and simply does a great job.

A quick list of items (that first come to mind) are your CW iambic paddles, rotor control box, computer keyboard, VHF/UHF rigs, SWR bridge, AC voltage monitor, UTC clock, telephone and a multitude of other light weight items that can be satisfactorily secured on your operating table by using this material.

This will be my last OPERATING TIP, HEARD/WORKED DX, and DXPEDITION columns for awhile. New employment, becoming a grandparent (for the first time), and my XYL's upcoming surgery prevent me from continuing these columns. I hope that someone else will volunteer to write about DX news and pass along some of his or her personal operating/station ideas. It's been fun and I sincerely hope that these columns have been helpful to all of you.

73 & DX, Gary – K9LJN

P.S. If you work DX and still need Peter 1 Island, the 3X0Y operation is scheduled to start in late January, 2005. This may be one of the last expeditions to this isolated island because of transportation cost, which has been estimated to be \$500,000. For more detailed information on the expedition, visit their web page at www.peterone.com and please be generous when you submit your QSL request. GL!

Presidents Log December 2004

I would like to start by thanking the board for their support throughout this last year as well as the membership. I think it has been a good year for RARA. I know that I have enjoyed the variety of programs that we have had, thanks mostly to Scott Allshouse, W9SBA, and Gary Hilker, K9LJN, for arranging the programs. Thanks to Nicholas Lager, KB9SKW, who has been making sure we had refreshments at the back of the room.

There are many to thank this year as the club functioned as a club, meaning that things needing to be done were done by many people. Maybe at times we thought it should be even more members involved, like at the Waterfront, but overall it was good. Those that did not work with us at the Waterfront festival just don't know what a good time was missed, and I really mean that. The music was great, and we have times when it is not busy just to get to know each other better.

It is nice to see new members this year. It seems like more than in the past, but maybe not. What I like that I have seen is the new members volunteering for things and suggesting new ideas!

The banquet is coming up in a month. Make sure that you get your name and money to Sue Peters, KA9NGR, as soon as possible. Those that worked Waterfront will get something off their meals. Sue has the list of who worked and # of shifts to be able to figure out the discount that is appropriate. For every shift that you worked you will get a \$5 discount off your meal. If you were a supervisor and worked the whole day, you get your meal free. No refunds and no cash value with this coupon! Next year I hope that this will get more of our members to volunteer, and if not, at least those that do will feel better about having to cover for the rest that don't work. Ouch.

Also for the banquet, a motion was made at the meeting and was passed that the club will buy everyone desert. Wow, that is worth coming for!

We are in need of a new Ham Rag Editor. We would like to thanks John Auerswald, KA9SOG, for doing a great job for quite a while. Please contact our new President, Bill Peters, WB9MCZ, if you can take over that position.

We have had some startup problems with the ATV repeater, but then what project does not go through some turmoil. I have a new modulator set to install today to get it back on the air. Thanks to those in the ATV group that have worked on the project. We will accept dues (\$50) anytime for 2005. This will help us buy toys, I mean enhancements, for the ATV repeater. One of the things on the list to get is a color camera that can be mounted on the roof and be able to rotate for weather situations or just to see the nice view from up there.

Again, thanks for all of your support this last year. See you at the meeting.

Shari and I would like to wish each of you a Merry Christmas.

Gene – WB9MMM



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

November 12, 2004
St. Anthony Hospital

Members present: 30

RARA President Gene Harlan, WB9MMM called the meeting to order at 7:10 pm.

Minutes: Secretary Wendy Owano, KC9BCF read the minutes from the October meeting. Gene Harlan asked that the wording be changed concerning his request of Nicholas Lager, KB9SKW to be club secretary for 2005 to include that the membership voted in favor of his request. Larry Snyder, K0HNM moved to accept the minutes as corrected, second by Tim Peterson, KC9DNN motion carried.

Treasurer's Report: President Harlan reported that the club balance was \$4,538.49 as of October 26, 2004. Gary Hilker, K9LJN moved to accept the report as presented, second by Larry Snyder, motion carried.

Old Business

OTW: Committee chairman Scott Allshouse, W9SBA reported that the accuracy was very good (99.3, 98.4, 99.7) but not as good as last year. A check for \$1,312.00 was received for our work at the event. The Board of Directors decided that the club would pay \$5/shift for each volunteer toward the cost of dinner at the January Award Banquet and to pay the dinner cost of supervisors and assistants.

President Harlan stated that the 2005 dues were printed in the November Ham Rag.

January Banquet: Sue Peters, KA9GNR reported that the banquet will be held at the Hoffman House on January 14, 2005, starting at 6 pm. Other details and reservation form are in November Ham Rag. Jim Miller, W4JR moved that the club provide dessert for all paid dinners, second by Bob Davidson, WA9NTT motion carried.

JOTA: Gene Harlan reported that the event was very well attended, about 45-50 Scouts and others. Mark Broman N9CNW, Dan, Carl, Gene, Nicholas, and Shari helped with this. Tim Peterson worked with about 25 Ogle County Cub Scouts ages 6-9.

The Constitutional change proposal from the October meeting to combine the Secretary and Treasurer board positions was revisited for a vote at this month's meeting. A majority voted to reject the proposed change.

New Business

Bill Peters, WB9MCZ announced that the Ham Rag editor has resigned. He requested that anyone who is interested in taking on this important club position, please contact him.

One Minute Interest Group Reports

ATV: Gene Harlan reported the ATV antenna is operational. Gene and Dan Hunt will hook-up to NASA TV soon.

Recruiter: Bob Davidson brought forward another fundraising program that sells coupon books for area businesses and restaurants. Please forward any names of future club members to Bob.

DX-HF: Gary Hilker reported that the bands are "stinko" right now!

ARES: Sue Peters reported that unique name tags will be developed to designate training levels for individuals involved in ARES. Training sessions will be announced soon.

President Harlan reported that future licensing classes will not be held at RVC. As interest is generated for a class one will be scheduled.

Motion to adjourn by Larry Snyder, second by Chuck Derwent, K9SAN motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,
Wendy Owano, RARA Secretary



W9ATN ATV Repeater Update

The repeater is now complete and installed on top of St. Anthony Medical Center. Including a few unexpected purchases for a new modulator and equipment to better support the antennas since mother nature bent our original mast. By the end of this month, we hope to have three other inputs that can be selected this being NASA TV, a tv camera showing temperature of repeater and the 434 Mhz input. We still need to purchase a 434 Mhz receiver for a secondary low power input, various odds and ends to complete the installation, and a camera remote control system to have at the repeater site so people can see the view from the repeater site. The camera would also double as a weather observation during severe weather. Other options will be added as funds come available.



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.

The repeater will have an input of 1250 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 community's. This may help in keep the costs down and allowing more amateurs wanting to get into ATV to do so.

We hope to have a portable system soon so that we hope will be able to do site surveys to help people find out what equipment they may need to be able to access the repeater from their home QTH. With the present configuration you will need a 1.2 Ghz ATV transmitter, a 421.25 ATV receiver (channel 57 on a cable ready tv on an outside antenna), camera, monitor, a video Id'er (a white card with call letters in black will work), 1.2 Ghz and 425 Mhz antennas, and finally a 2 meter radio set to 144.34 for talk around. However you can still use the ATV audio channel.

We are also planning to offer a certificate to anyone receiving the ATV repeater signal. As proof, they could submit a video tape (we can return it) along with the report. This offer would be to anyone, even non hams.

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.

UHF WOODPECKER NOISE HERE

For two years, ham radio operators of UHF repeater systems in the Colorado Front Range have been hearing a regular pulsing or clicking noise on weak signal repeater users. The interfering signal has a rhythmic clicking sound, similar to a slow motor vehicle ignition spark or as some hams have nicknamed it, "The woodpecker". Almost every UHF repeater system in the Denver area has experienced this noise.

In November of 2002, several hams volunteered to help the Colorado Council of Amateur Radio Clubs find the source of the noise via radio direction-finding techniques. The offending transmitter was surprisingly found to be located on Buckley Air Force Base, just east of Denver.

At first, the hams assumed the system was likely to be a malfunctioning transmitter, and various attempts at contacting the proper authorities were made. For a short time, the system was even switched off from time to time, presumably when not in use.

As more information was gathered, hams learned from various sources including the Internet, that the system causing the harmful interference is a military radio system known as the Enhanced Position Location Reporting System, or EPLRS.

EPLRS and its airborne counterpart, EPLRS are spread spectrum systems designed such that they have multiple UHF channels that overlap. These channels are numerous enough that they cover virtually the entire weak-signal and repeater input portions of the UHF Amateur band in Colorado, from approximately 426 MHz to 450 MHz. Spectrum analysis data captured by local hams and the FCC confirms this.

How does this affect you?

Recently, Colorado hams have been hearing from our neighbors in Albuquerque, New Mexico that they are hearing similar interference on UHF repeaters in the Sandia Peak area, and at least one source indicates that hams may also have reported similar interference to the FCC in Sacramento, California.

Furthermore, other research indicates that it is likely that more than 25 EPLRS systems are slated for deployment or are already deployed in the Continental United States, Alaska and Hawaii.

Hams who enjoy UHF weak signal and FM repeater operation near military installations should be alert to the possibility of such interference. It is hoped that more widespread knowledge of this very broadband UHF interference source may help hams in other areas who have been hearing it.

For further information, a public e-mail discussion group has been set up that anyone can join by sending an e-mail to uhfnoise@googlegroups.com.

RADIO SAFETY: EXPLODING CELLPHONES - A RARE BUT GENUINE CONCERN

The Consumer Product Safety Commission says that in the past two years, U.S. safety officials have received 83 reports of cellular telephones phones or cellphone batteries exploding or catching fire. Burns to the face, neck, leg and hip are among the dozens of injury reports.

To decrease the chances of an explosion, experts say to avoid using poorly made and second-party batteries and never short the battery terminals. Also, be sure you are using the right charger and don't overcharge the battery. Lastly, avoid exposing the phone components to water or extreme temperatures.

While there has been only a relatively small number of incidents for a nation with 170 million wireless users, to the Consumer Product Safety Commission it is a major concern.

So beware of cheap battery packs and batteries from unknown or little heard of vendors.

Northern Illinois Volunteer Examiners will be holding the next Amateur Radio exam session in Rockford, IL

**on
Saturday, December 18, 2004.**

**Location:
St. Anthony Hospital
5666 E. State Street
Rockford, IL**

Exams will be held in the St Francis Room (just right of the front entrance after you enter).

Check-in is from 9:00 AM till 10:30 AM. We require two ID's with your signature on them (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.

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

The test fee for 2004 is \$12.00. Walk-ins welcome.

Contact Information
Randy Scott, W9HL
W9HL@arrr.net
815-877-4328

Ham Radio Road Rally

A road rally involving amateur radio operators and their families will be held New Years Eve night, combined with a progressive dinner. The object of the rally is to provide a family friendly social activity that test the knowledge and skills of the amateur radio operator, while providing a means for family members to also participate by solving clues or answering questions that will lead their group to various destinations. The destinations correspond to the different parts of a meal, e.g. appetizers, main meal, desert, etc. Depending on how well your group solves those clues will ultimately determine how well your group eats that night. So whether your single or married, this will be an activity for everyone. At the upcoming December meeting the details will be finalized. So come with your ideas. Equally important is the need for volunteers. If your able and willing to contribute, there is a need for a few operators to handle radio traffic and some ground work, along with people willing to open their homes for a short time.

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@arrr.net and visit <http://rara.tripod.com> for any late breaking news and information. Please submit any articles before the 1st of each month.

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. *Except for December.*

RARA Officers for 2004

**President: Gene Harlan WB9MMM
Vice President: Scott Allshouse W9SBA
Secretary: Wendy Owano KC9BCF
Treasurer: Carl Cacciatore W9TQ
Director: Dan Hunt KC9ATR
Director: Gary Hilker K9LJN
Director: Nicolas Lager KB9SKW
Director: Larry Snyder K0HNM
Newsletter and Web Site:
John Auerswald KA9SOG**

This issue of the HAMRAG was made possible by their article or photo submissions:

Gary Hilker, K9LJN, Gene Duncan, W9GD, Gene Harlan, WB9MMM, Randy Scott, W9HL, NJDXA, 425DXN, ARRL, Wendy Owano, KC9BCF, Amateur Radio Newline™

**2005 RARA Awards Dinner
January 14, 2005**

6:00 pm - Happy Hour 7:00 pm - Dinner
Hoffman House
Holiday Inn
East State Street & Bell School Road.
Rockford, IL

The Menu:

Pesto Primavera (Vegetarian)	\$19.00
* Boneless Chicken Breast	\$19.00
* Stuffed Orange Roughy (fish)	\$21.50
* Roast Prime Rib of Beef	\$24.00

* Include:

Baked Potato
House Vegetable
Salad
Non alcoholic drink (coffee, tea, milk)

Cash Bar will be available.

All prices include taxes and gratuities.

Reservations are due by December 31, 2004

Checks should be made payable to RARA

Mail your Reservations to:

Sue Peters
8312 Tetterhall LN.
Machesney Park, IL. 61115-7929



<u>Item</u>		<u>Qty.</u>		<u>Sub Total</u>
Pesto Primavera Vegetarian Platter	\$19.00	_____	x	_____
Boneless Chicken Breast	\$19.00	_____	x	_____
Stuffed Orange Roughy (fish)	\$21.50	_____	x	_____
Roast Prime Rib of Beef	\$24.00	_____	x	_____
			Total	_____

Name: _____

Total of Guests (including you) _____

HAM OF THE YEAR 2004 NOMINATIONS

The Ham of the Year award is an honor that is presented to the R.A.R.A member who has contributed the most to the club and to amateur radio in general during the year. This year the selection will be made by a committee established to evaluate the nominations of deserving candidates from those submitted by club members.

Your nominee should be chosen using two basic criteria: The nominee must be a R.A.R.A. member and should have performed exemplary service for amateur radio during the year 2004.

We encourage you to take a few minutes to fill out the form below, or a facsimile, completing all of the requested information. Nominations may be mailed to Larry at the address below or handed to him at the next club meeting. All nominations must be received by December 10, 2004. They will remain confidential. Your participation and early response will be appreciated.

Mail nominations to:

Larry Snyder K0HNM
107 Abbey Drive
Poplar Grove, IL 61065
lsnyder@execpc.com



NOMINATION FOR HAM OF THE YEAR

Nominee _____

Call _____

I nominate the above person for the RARA Ham of the Year 2004 award for the following reasons:

Signed _____

Call _____



Rockford Amateur Radio Association, Inc.

P.O. Box 8465, Rockford, IL 61126
Phone: (815) 398-2683
E-Mail: w9axd@arrl.net
Web Site - <http://rara.tripod.com>

Mailing Address Goes Here



December 2004

Seasons Greetings

ROCKFORD AMATEUR RADIO ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Single \$30.00 Family \$35.00
Senior \$15.00 Senior Family \$20.00
Student \$15.00 HamRag Only \$10.00

NAME _____ CALL SIGN _____
ADDRESS _____
CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____
HOME PHONE _____
WORK PHONE _____
EMAIL _____
RENEWAL _____ NEW _____ RETIRED _____
RADIO INTEREST _____
OTHER INTERESTS _____
SUGGESTIONS _____

RETURN COMPLETED FORM TO:
ROCKFORD AMATEUR RADIO ASSOCIATION
P.O. BOX 8465
ROCKFORD, ILLINOIS 61126

