



# the RARRA RAG

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APRIL, 2007

NO. 8

## April Meeting Announcement

By Jim DiTucci, N2IXD  
Vice-President, RARA

Meet Your Friends at RaRa on Friday, April 6, 2007 for our annual Old Timers' Night. Old Timers' Night this year will again be a popular program brought to you by our Club Historian and Curator of the AWA Museum, Ed Gable K2MP.

This year Ed will depart from telling us of local club history and instead bring to us a story that was recently in the news, the story of the first AM broadcast transmission in 1906 by Reginald Fessenden. Commonly heard news articles feted Fessenden for his historic deed, but Ed asks the question... "Did he really?" Was he first? Did he do it at all? Was there equipment available in 1906 to achieve this? Humm, I wonder. You'll have to come and hear and judge for yourself.

As always, you can expect nothing short of a professional, interesting and entertaining program celebrating Old Timer's Night. Don't miss this opportunity to Meet Your Friends at RaRa and join in the celebration of one of the many rich traditions that have carried through the 75+ years of our club's existence. See you there.

## Spring Amateur Licensing Session

By Brad Armstrong, W1YX  
RARA License Class Coordinator

This year's Spring amateur licensing session will be in April and May. It promises to be a productive and enjoyable learning experience with the fine instructors who have volunteered their time. The format of the classes is fast paced and helps the students, along with self-study and review, to learn the information needed to pass the exams in short order.

Registration will be held on Saturday, April 7<sup>th</sup> at 9 am. The classes will be held at RIT, Gleason Building #9, Room 3149, with parking in Lot-J. The classes will run from close of registration to 12 that morning and 9 to 12 each Saturday morning through May 12<sup>th</sup>. There is a possibility that the Extra class will be held on a different evening schedule due to instructor availability, however registration will still be on that Saturday morning. As always, registration fees include only a nominal charge to cover Club costs in presenting the course and a year of membership in the Club.

Updated details of scheduling, classrooms, and fees will continue to be provided on the Club website at <http://www.rochesterham.org>, along with a map of the building location. Click on the link there for 'Amateur Radio License Course' to find all of that and more!

## RaRa MEETING

April 6, 2007

7:30 P.M.

Henrietta Fire Hall #1

3129 East Henrietta Road

**"OLD TIMERS' NIGHT"**

with Ed Gable, K2MP

**The First AM Broadcast in 1906**

## SILENT KEYS

**Robert K. Taylor, W8JZC**

February 17, 2007

**Donald L. Longacre, NW2V**

February 27, 2007

**Michael G. Rice, W2FY**

February 27, 2007

**June R. Zillioux, KB2WJT**

March 4, 2007

# the RARA RAG

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## The Prez Sez

By Bill Kasperkoski, WB2SXY  
President, RARA

Many thanks to the hard working members of RARA's staff, for example, Dick K2GI, and Ed K2MP, for the quick rework of last month's RAG for the Ed N2EH memorial article. The ability to change plans, with short notice and few resources, helps show hams' capabilities. While giving thanks, I would also like to remember the BoD members, Raj N2RD, Larry W2ZEY, Jim W2COP, Ross KC2LOC, Keith N2BEL, Frank WB2PYD, Peter K2LOL, John KE2QJ, VP Jim N2IXD and Treasurer George KA2GPJ for their service this year in helping RARA, and of course the sub-committee people who run the nuts-and-bolts portion of the organization.

Everyone has heard me discuss having backups for each job function and this has been one of the assignments that each staff person and officer has been charged with; write a job description that will be useful to your backup and others willing and able to fill in in case someone gets hit by a truck on the way home from work. I have also asked that each of the staff write their bio for public relations uses. By the way, everyone who can disagree with me and the BoD is invited to apply for Board of Director, Officer and staff positions; because, as General Patton said "If we all think alike, somebody isn't thinking." Frankly speaking, we need people who think.

If you like to write or take photos, we have a position for you in our public relations, web and media communications efforts. Make sure that you identify the people in the pix for the future! Send your shack picture with you at the controls to Peter W2SKY. Copy in Larry W2ZEY also.

Wear your callsign nametag your ARRL or Coolie or other organization name tag to the RARA General Meetings, so others can introduce themselves to you. Meet your friends at RARA. Meet your friends at the Rochester Hamfest. Hams are communicators, so let's do it. I would rather have the meetings run several minutes longer than miss an opportunity to say hello to a new licensee.

Let's use the '88 repeater for talk-in to the general and even special RARA meetings. We already use it for the hamfest and picnic talk-in. Remember, communicate.

Again, send your bio in and apply for the Staff, Officer or Board position of your choice -- the ham population contains many diverse opinions, and I know who you are -- your call starts with an A, K, N, or W. The more varied the voices in RARA the better our decisions will be to benefit all the members.

## RaRa Rag 20 Years Ago, March 1987

By Ed Gable, K2MP  
RARA Historian

The April meeting was the annual RaRa *Old Timers' Night* conducted by Bruce Kelley, W2ICE. The venue was the 40/8 Club on University Avenue. Amateur Radio Exams were not as regularly scheduled as they are now, making news of exams being scheduled at the pending Rochester Hamfest quite newsworthy.

Al DeBlicek, KW2X, wrote details on how to plan for the exams that required pre-registration and a completed FCC 610 form. The cost was \$4.35. In the ARES/RACES column you would have read that even at this early date there were 18 public service events scheduled. A special ARES/RACES meeting was called on April 4<sup>th</sup> to figure out how to schedule all of the needed volunteers. Sad news came out of the FCC office when they announced yet another petition was denied to open the 17 meter band to U.S. Amateurs. Even though the WARC conference authorized the band in 1979, U.S. government agencies claimed they needed use of the band until 1989.

Citing improvements in equipment at RaRa Club station K2JD, Trustee Ed Holdsworth, N2EH, offered a bid sale of excess equipment.

In what would turn out to be a controversial proposal, the FCC moved to relocate the bottom 2 MHz of the 220-225 MHz band to the land mobile service. The ARRL promised a strenuous opposition. In another FCC proposal, called PRB-3, they called for the issuing of call signs by private agencies. The legal issues could never be worked out and it died. This was, after all, the April issue and experienced readers looked for the April Fool's article. It wasn't hard to find as the entire back page was a spoof called the "ArAr Gag." Featured headlines included the IRS allowing hams to declare ham rigs as dependents and the Town of Perinton zoning a hams only sub-division where towers are mandatory. A new advertiser was Doug Kipphut, KA2APP, doing business as DK Communications, a tower and antenna service company. From the Want Ads, you could buy a Heath HW-101 with power supply and cw filter, for \$225.00 from Bill, WB2OEV.

## Volunteering Now Easier Than Ever Before

By Keith Freeberg, N2BEL  
RARA Public Service Coordinator

Now you can sign up for a public service event from the convenience of your home computer any time of day or night. Just visit RARA's updated Public Service page on <http://RochesterHam.org> and you'll find getting details of the event, asking questions about the event and even signing up just an easy click away. Of course, you can still call 254-0722, email [n2bel@arrl.net](mailto:n2bel@arrl.net) or sign up at a meeting to learn about events or sign up as well. I'll always be happy to talk with you personally.

How does it work? Volunteering or letting me know what questions you have about an event generates an email dialogue box that, once filled out, will be sent directly to me. Clicking on the 'Details' button will take you to the most recent posting of information about the event available. And, there is even a button you can click to find out more about public service and what types of things we might do during an event.

If you've not participated in public service in a while, or maybe you are contemplating volunteering for the first time you are especially welcome. You can choose to be paired with an experienced and understanding Ham to 'try out' public service, if you wish. You can go as slowly or as quickly as you wish from operating with a mentor to operating individually. In fact you can go to operating individually right away if you wish. You determine when you are ready.

Each event has a pre-event training component. As much information as possible is emailed to participants in advance or can be found in the event details online. Still, for most events there is a five minute meeting, just prior to start time, to go over any maps, assignment specifics and known communications issues. Some large events have a training session for all volunteers hosted at a local restaurant with lots of handouts and information you'll want to know. And, who can fault enjoying a good meal with your fellow Hams.

Questions and concerns are always welcome. Please feel free to contact me any time.

**MemorialScholarship  
Application Deadline  
April 15, 2007**

**May Rag Deadline  
April 13, 2007**

# Sidebands: Amateur Radio in the News

By Larry Wallnau, W2ZEY  
RARA Media Coordinator

**Website of the Month.** The following link will take you to a most useful website. It contains an online calculator for coax loss. The calculator will compute loss for a large variety of coax cables. <http://www.ocarc.ca/coax.htm>

**Historical Ham Radio Film.** In 1955, The Phil-Mont Mobile Radio Club, an association of mobile amateur radio operators, provided emergency communications during the devastating flood of August, 1955 along the Delaware River and in the Pocono Mountains following Hurricane Diane, the sixth costliest U.S. hurricane of the 20th century -- fifty years before Hurricane Katrina. In 1959, the club produced a short film to explain amateur radio, and especially mobile communications as practiced by the club.

The main film begins after a three minute interview with Jim Spencer, W3BBB, produced by a local cable channel many years later. Go to <http://tinyurl.com/2fcof4> or <http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=2943570522939177086&hl=en>

**Driving While Distracted.** A couple of years ago, I planned a trip to Connecticut. A friend [and attorney] in Connecticut contacted me with a warning. The state had recently passed a driving while distracted law – an expansion of the “hands-free” cell phone law. The law is board-based law, written to include, but not limited to, cell phone use, personal grooming, reading, eating or drinking, or another other activity deemed a distraction to driving. Members of law enforcement were given leeway to use their discretion based on the driver's road performance and the activity in the car. My friend knew that I use repeaters along the trip. His interpretation was that "distraction" was broadly defined by the law and that I should not use my mobile radio in CT unless I pull to the side of the road. As distracted driving continues to become a hot issue [originating with cell phone use, I believe] the number of states with such laws will increase. Bills aimed at thwarting "driving while cellular" and "driving while distracted" behaviors have been introduced in several states, and most are worded broadly enough to potentially proscribe some Amateur Radio mobile operation. ARRL Regulatory Information Specialist Dan Henderson, N1ND <[reginfo@arrl.org](mailto:reginfo@arrl.org)>, so far has catalogued 11 active pieces of legislation. Bills introduced in Montana and New Mexico have been sidelined for

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now, but related measures – more than one in some states – remain alive in Georgia, New Jersey, Oregon, Texas, Vermont, Washington and Wyoming. Henderson reports that ARRL Field Organization volunteers and members called the League's attention to the various pieces of pending legislation, none of which specifically exempt Amateur Radio mobile operation. "In most cases we try to work to have language exempting Amateur Radio inserted into the bill, rather than narrowing by definition the behavior or activity the bill seeks to address," Henderson explains. "It is a far easier approach and removes ambiguity down the road." I wrote to Allen Pitts W1AGP [[w1agp@arrl.org](mailto:w1agp@arrl.org)] who is the ARRL Public Information Officer and made the following suggestion: "It would be helpful to make a list of states with distraction laws along with a brief summary of restrictions specified. It would be a good idea to publicize such a list to the amateur community. Certainly, if I had this information I would ... distribute it to members of my club." Allen replied and told me he was forwarding my idea to the person who has been keeping an eye on these laws. What do you do in the meantime? When you travel, be sure you are aware of any driving while distracted laws in the state you visit.

**CPM-07.** Some 800 delegates representing 97 countries are attended the second session of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) Radiocommunication Sector (ITU-R) Conference Preparatory Meeting (CPM-07) in Geneva. A major step along the way to World Radiocommunication Conference 2007 (WRC-07), CPM-07 convened February 19 and lasted until March 2. Representing Amateur Radio are International Amateur Radio Union [IARU, <http://www.iau.org>] President Larry Price, W4RA, and Technical Representative Ken Pulfer, VE3PU. WRC-07 agenda items of interest to Amateur Radio involve allocations in the 4-10 MHz range, a possible secondary allocation to the amateur service at 136 kHz, the modification of footnotes to the Table of Frequency Allocations, and the selection of agenda items for future WRCs. WRC-07 agenda item 1.13 will review allocations to all services between 4 and 10 MHz, excluding allocations from 7.0 to 7.2 MHz, which were settled to the advantage of Amateur Radio during WRC-03. Starting in March 2009, radio amateurs will enjoy a worldwide 200 kHz segment on 40 meters. WRC-07 agenda item 1.15 will consider establishing a secondary Amateur Radio Service allocation in the band 135.7 to 137.8 kHz. While CPM Report text describing a method to provide this allocation appeared to be finalized by February 22, it's no guarantee that WRC-07 will actually make the LF allocation.

# Explorer Post 621 Status

By Peter Fournia, W2SKY  
RARA Education Chairman

RARA operates an Explorer Post for youth over 14 years of age. It started January 9 and continues for 13 sessions ending April 17. It is called Explorer Post 621 and is cosponsored with RIT and administered through the offices of Boy Scouts of America, Otetiana Council in Rochester. We have been meeting for 2 hours every Tuesday evening in a RIT electronics lab.

Our program is called "Electronics and Telecommunications" and we take a hands-on approach to explorer vocational topics within this subject. We build breadboard circuits, explorer circuit parameter changes, demonstrate hardware, use simulation programs and use electronic instruments. Each explorer is supplied with a breadboard kit, project components and a PICAXE microprocessor. The explorers at the end of the program will retain the microprocessor and some components.

We use an excellent modern electronics lab at RIT! Jim Stefano, is the system administrator in the electrical engineering building at RIT. Jim made arrangements for us to use this topnotch educational facility. Each lab workstation is equipped with a digital multimeter, a function generator, a power supply, an oscilloscope and a computer. We use it all! When presenting and demonstrating, the coaches use a large whiteboard and video projector. We display our breadboard circuits using a CAM that projects the image onto large viewing screens. You could not ask for anything better!

We have capability for 22 people but 17 explorers signed up and 13 have stuck with it. Each explorer paid \$40. Otetiana Council gets part of that. In return, we get our program information mailed to youth that have expressed an interest in electronics or telecommunications. (The council maintains an evergreen list of youth that have expressed an interest in an array of approximately 50 vocational topics.) RARA kicks in additional money from our education fund. The largest expense is the microprocessor kit and components associated with interfacing it. This is an excellent collaboration; RARA - RIT - Otetiana Council - Explorer program. The youth are served and the programs of these organizations are evergreen. A win, win, win, win, win situation!

You can get a good feel for our program content by viewing the schedule on the RARA website. Go to [www.rochesterham.org](http://www.rochesterham.org) and follow the links to Explorer Post 621. View the "2006-2007 Program"

link. Also contained on the schedule are links to the lesson plans and handouts for each session.

The first 2 sessions covered circuit components, circuit concepts and use of the instruments at the lab workstation. Dave Hassett, K2SQI, Jim Reilich, WB2YJH, and Peter Fournia, W2SKY presented these two sessions. Bill Kraft, WB2IHM, presented the next two sessions. Bill covered transistors, breadboarded an audio amplifier and used an ORCAD program for electronic design and simulation of the circuit. Bill Kraft returned to lead sessions 7 & 8 that introduced building and using the PICAXE microprocessor.

Bill Hopkins, AA2YV planned and led two interesting sessions. The explorers built an RF oscillator in session 5 and added a buffer-amplifier to the design during session 6. At the end of session 6 the explorers were operating an AM modulated 40 meter transmitter that was received on the coach's HT's. Our HT's were receiving weird melodic tones ported from the lab function generator and music such as Beethoven's 5<sup>th</sup> Symphony ported from the lab computer sound card and internet connection to YouTube!

We have 5 sessions remaining. Raj Dewan, N2RD will cover Radio Wave Propagation, Peter Fournia, will cover Satellite communications and another session on WiFi with Curtis Braun, N2HKD. Lastly, Bill Kraft returns to lead 2 sessions that will apply the microprocessor we had build earlier to applications that the explorers have chosen.

The coaches have put forth a large effort to deliver this program. Bill Kraft will have planned and led 8 of the 13 sessions. Peter Fournia has been planning and coordinating the program. About eight additional people, not listed here, have been assisting in the lab or in other ways. Thank you to all.

## RDXA April 17th Meeting

By Vic Gauvin, K1PY

### PSK31 and Other Sound-Card Digital Radio Modes by Alan Masson, K6PSP / G3PSP

Digital radio modes such as PSK31 are easy and inexpensive to install and have become very popular in recent years. Did you know there can be as many as 20 simultaneous PSK31 QSOs taking place within the bandwidth of a single SSB channel, such as 14.070 - 14.073 MHz? **Alan, K6PSP** will describe how to get started on PSK31 and many other modes that use the computer's sound-card, using free or inexpensive software, and will play examples to help you identify these strange sounds on the amateur bands.

## Member Photographs Wanted –

By Larry Wallnau, W2ZEY  
RARA Media Coordinator

On the RARA website there is a page for shack photos. Unfortunately, there are not many on that page. Then I came across the **Rotten Apples Group**. Yes, this is a club of ham radio operators. The members have contributed a sufficient number of photographs to make wallpaper on the main page [<http://members.aol.com/RottenApplesARG/rottenapples.html>]. There also is a separate page of member photos. Click on “Some Photos” from the main page or visit:

[<http://members.aol.com/RottenApplesARG/photos.html>].

Rotten Apples have a number of member photos that were not taken in a shack – just basic portrait-type photos done with an ordinary digital camera.

**Now here is my plan [and plea].** Let’s pitch in to get more photos for Peter to put on the RARA site. It is not necessary that it is a photo of you in the shack, but that would be fine. It could be an outdoor photo of you holding your HT. For that matter, dispense with the HT and just submit a photo of yourself. **One basic rule** is that the shot should be taken at a sufficiently close distance so your face will be recognizable. Here is an example of a photo that would not work at all. You are hanging from pitons halfway up El Capitan and a photographer at the base of the granite cliff takes your picture. You would be a mere speck in the photo. [And you could not even brag about conquering El Capitan because no one could identify you in the picture.] **Try a buddy system.** Get together with one or more ham[s] for coffee, and with a digital camera take photos of each other. Or use a tripod and take a self-portrait. RARA continues to have greater visibility in the community because of our activities. We have received more media attention over the years as a result. It is time to show the community who we are by adding photos to our website. Yes, I practice what I preach. I already have a photo to contribute [not on El Capitan]. So don’t be camera shy.

## Scholarship Deadline Is Here

By George Masny, KA2GPJ  
Treasurer, RARA

Just a reminder that the “Rochester Amateur Radio Association Memorial Scholarship” deadline is now here. Applications **MUST** be postmarked by April 15, 2007. The Scholarship was established with generous donations made in

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memory of A. Leland Zwack, W2WPF; William Buchan, W2OMV and William Resch, K4VOS. The scholarship is available to any licensed Amateur Radio operator who is or will be pursuing any degree of Associate level or higher in any accredited school beyond high school. The individual must be a member of RARA and a resident of New York State. The scholarship is for one individual in one year, but the recipient may reapply for subsequent years.

## April Calendar of events

- 6 - RaRa General Meeting – 7:30 PM –  
Henrietta Fire Hall, 3129 East Henrietta Road
- 7 - License Class Begins – 9:00AM – RIT Bldg-9  
Room 3149, park in Lot-J
- 12 - RaRa BOD – 6:30PM – Annual Dinner  
Meeting at Northside Inn, East Rochester
- 13 - RVHFG – 7:30 PM, monthly meeting at  
Ogden Town Hall, 269 Ogden Center Rd.
- 17 - RDXA – 7:30 PM, Monthly meeting at Gander  
Mountain, Jay Scutti Blvd, Henrietta
- 20 - RRRR – 8:00 PM, Monthly meeting  
Pittsford Town Hall, basement meeting room.
- 21 - RaRa VE Testing session – 10:00 AM Bldg-9  
Room-3139 RIT Campus, Henrietta  
This is the final test session before the  
Hamfest.

### RaRa Amateur Radio License Testing

All Elements needed  
to complete a license class.

3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of each  
Month, Sept. – April

Registration – 10:00AM  
Testing – 10:15AM

Room 3139, Building 9  
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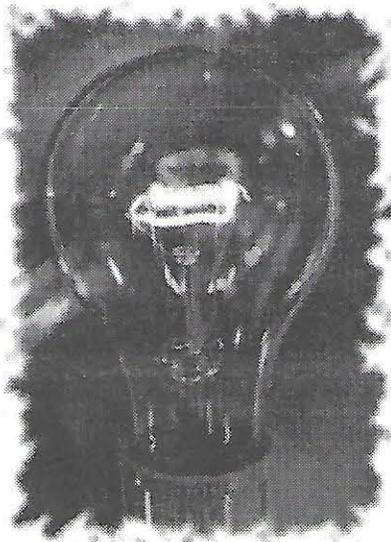
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