

# HAM RAG



Visit our website for more club and area ham information  
In the Rockford area at <http://www.w9axd.org>

## RARA Mission Statement

A member association with common interest of public service to the community through the use of amateur radio.

## July 2010

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### NEXT MEETING

**FRIDAY**  
**July 9, 2010**  
**7:00 pm**

**Presentation:**

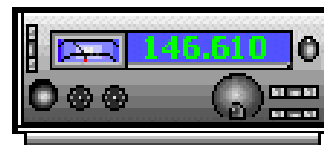
**"EQSL"**  
**Electronic QSL Program**

**By:**  
**Robert Larson**  
**KC9ICH**

**Location:**  
**St. Anthony**  
**Medical Center**  
**Foundation Room**  
**5666 E. State Street**  
**Rockford, IL**

## \*\* PRICELESS ! \*\*

Latest news and events on our web page: <http://www.w9axd.org>



## From the Vice President

Here we are at the beginning of July, and half of the year is now gone. Two of the club's big events are over, "Breakfast in the Park", and "Field Day" weekend, as well as, 5 meeting programs presented by some highly qualified people.

Given that, I am disappointed with the attendance at all of the clubs meetings and events. Typically, there have been only about 20 people attending each of the meetings, events and Monday night nets. Mostly, it is the same people.

According to the ARRL 2009 report, the number of new licensees has increased over the last year as well as ARRL membership. I am at a loss as to why RARA is seeing a decrease in member attendance. We have published the list of topics and events well in advance, in the Ham Rag, website, and on the Monday night net, so that we could all plan ahead rather than finding out at the last minute.

RARA currently has about 51+ members. I would like some feedback on the following question: *Why are you not participating in club meetings, Breakfast in the Park, and Field Day?* Please send me a note by email or if you wish to remain anonymous, mail it to the club PO Box 8465, Rockford 61126 without your name or bring it to the July 9<sup>th</sup> meeting and put it in a box that will be available. As a board, we are trying to meet your wishes. So much for my disappointment!

Looking ahead, the RARA family picnic is August 22 at Alpine Park shelter #1. The upcoming programs are on EQSL, ARES overview, HF radio discussion of features, repeaters and how they work, MARS program update, and a video on DXpeditions. The club's only fund raiser is on Labor Day weekend manning a booth at "On the Waterfront". We work 4 hour shifts exchanging money for event tickets. Those who have helped in the past have really enjoyed working the event. Please consider helping, you will be given a weekend pass for OTW and a \$5 discount toward the January banquet meal for each shift worked.

73,  
Gene, KA9BOD  
2010 RARA VP  
[ka9bod@arrl.net](mailto:ka9bod@arrl.net)

### UPCOMING RARA EVENTS

**July 9** - General RARA Meeting 7:00 pm at OSF  
"EQSL Program" by Robert Larson, KC9ICH

**July 27** - RARA Board Meeting 7:00 pm at OSF

**August 13** - General RARA Meeting 7:00 pm at OSF  
"ARES Information" by Steve Twigg, W9SWT

**August 22** - RARA Family Picnic 11:30 am to 1:30 pm

**August 31** - RARA Board Meeting 7:00 pm at OSF

# Secretary's Report



## RARA Club Meeting June 11, 2010

The meeting was called to order by President Gordon Seaman, KC9NEX, at 7:05 pm. There were 25 members and guests in attendance.

**Secretary's Report:** Al, KD9CA, stated that the minutes were published in the May *Ham Rag* and said there were copies for anyone that needed one. Chuck, AB9KA, made a motion to accept the minutes as published and Chuck, K9SAN, seconded the motion. The motion carried.

**Treasurer's Report:** Paul, K9RNR, read the report for the period April 26<sup>th</sup> through May 22<sup>nd</sup> 2010.

Income:	\$10.50
Expenses:	\$124.00
Net income/loss	\$(113.50)
Ending Checking Balance:	\$1814.85
Ending Repeater Checking Balance:	\$310.00
Ending Savings Balance:	\$3214.02
Ending Total Cash on hand:	\$5338.87

Gene, KA9BOD, made a motion to accept the report as read and Jeff, N9ZUT, seconded the motion. The motion carried.

### Old Business:

Gordy, KC9NEX, reported that the 147 repeater was in the shop and Don, W9DRR, thinks it is not repairable. Gordy also said that the repair of the 220 repeater is still an unknown.

Gordy reminded all present that *Breakfast in the Park* will be held 8 to 11 am, June 12<sup>th</sup>. It is being held at Alpine Park, Shelter 2. Pancakes, sausage, eggs and coffee will be served.

### New Business:

Gordy KC9NEX said that he did not have any new business to bring before the membership. Gordy asked if anyone present had any new business. No new business was brought forward.

Kurt KE9N reported on Field Day reminding all present that Field Day is being held on June 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> and will be at Hononegah Forest Preserve, starting set up at 7 am.

Kurt said that Chuck AB9KA will be in charge of the food for the event. He also handed out a packet to each team leader that included a copy of the W9AXD license which must be on display for the event.

Kurt reminded everyone to be careful and be safe.

He then spent some time explaining how the club could get extra points for Field Day. There are a total of 950 extra points available for various compliances.

(continued on next page)

## Secretary's Report *(continued)*

These are:

- Have a public information table.
- Submit a press release.
- Five contacts using a station operated with non fossil fuel emergency power.
- Operate Field Day in a public location.
- 100 points for each transmitter operating on emergency power
- Have a visit by an elected official
- Listen to and copy the *ARRL* bulletin
- Have a visit by a representative of a public agency
- Have a specific educational activity
- 50 points for submitting Field Day score to [www.b4h.net/cabforms](http://www.b4h.net/cabforms)

Kurt reminded all to:

- Display the W9AXD license
- Read the tips and techniques
- Don't assume the other guy will bring it
- Bring water! Be safe!

When Kurt finished, Kermit Carlson, W9XA, the Vice Chairman of *ARRL* Central Division gave an informative presentation of the *ARRL* including a PowerPoint presentation of *ARRL* headquarters in Newington, Connecticut.

At approximately 8:45 pm Paul, K9RNR, made a motion to adjourn and Jerry, KU9S, seconded the motion.

Submitted by  
AI KD9CA  
RARA Secretary

## RARA Information Net

The purpose of the net is to disseminate RARA related information as well as other Amateur Radio related information. As a club sponsored activity, please check in with Net Control and help make this net a success. The Net Control is rotated between the club members, with all amateur radio operators encouraged to check in. (RARA members as well as non-members)

Let any of the officers and board know you thoughts and ideas. If you wish to be a net control operator, let any of the officers know. All are encouraged and welcome to participate.

**146.610 (pl 114.8) repeater at 8:00 pm, every Monday, except on holidays.**



## VHF Contesting School: Antennas by KC9BQA, edited by KE9N

Experienced VHF/UHF hams will tell you that the antennas are easily the most important part of your station. Every single decibel is precious. This is not like HF where you can throw up a random wire and often work DX. From how high you get your antenna, to how much antenna you can afford to put up, right down to the feedline you use... it all adds up.

I am not an equipment expert, but I do know the advice about antennas is sound. I designed my station around antennas first, and rigs second. I'm not that crazy about telling guys which rigs and antennas to buy. You should put some research into it yourself. I used the "equipment reviews" at [www.chem.net](http://www.chem.net) all the time when I was planning things back in 2002-2003. They have many subcategories of ham gear under those equipment reviews, to help narrow your search for VHF this and VHF that.

Again, for maximum results on VHF/UHF, put the antennas first. If you have homebrewer in you, or if your club wants a fun project, check out this link for the WA5VJB Cheap Yagis. Multiple guys I trust say these give surprisingly good performance. <http://www.wa5vjb.com/yagi-pdf/cheapyagi.pdf> There are other links to WA5VJB Cheap Yagis, but I've been told that the one I just posted has the correct dimensions. Use that pdf file as a reference. I hope you enjoy VHF/UHF so much that you eventually step up to long-boom yagis with lots of gain. But if you just can't for some reason, get on with whatever you have and enjoy yourself. I want to add the following link for quagi antenna projects. This info comes from W9HQ out in EN43. I quote, "These WA5VJB Cheap Yagis really are awesome. The beauty of this design, as well as the N6NB quagi (see <http://commfaculty.fullerton.edu/woverbeck/quagi.htm>) is that there is no loss in the matching section. Traditional matching approaches like gamma matches and such can get pretty lossy at VHF and especially UHF freqs. But with these designs, the matching is built into the driven element, so you get all that back for free."

W9HQ continues..."The 'cheap yagis' are literally a one to two hour project. And you can build a whole stack of them for less than \$20. If you have one of the 'wonder rigs' (Such as Yaesu FT-857/897, Icom IC 706MkII, Kenwood TS-2000 — all HF bands + 6, 2 and/or 70cm) then don't let not having an antenna for VHF/UHF stand in your way of getting on the air."

Feedline is so much more important than it is on HF. The db losses at higher frequencies become much greater. There are better feedline experts than I, but if you have junk coax and you're trying to work weak ones on VHF, you're shooting yourself in the foot. Sometimes just improving old or lossy coax can really make a big difference in what you hear and work. To make these 200, 300 mile contacts, you want every last db you can get. A few db may be the difference between no signal and good copy (with headphones) in the S1 range. You don't want to wimp out on coax. Here are a few links that show the loss characteristics with various coaxes. <http://www.therfc.com/attenrat.htm> or try <http://www.ocarc.ca/coax.htm> I found these links by Googling "coaxial cable loss chart". Notice how large the losses are when you have a 100' or more run of poor coax at 144 or 432 MHz. Consider feedline to be part of your antenna budget and invest accordingly. It will pay off.

On VHF/UHF get your antennas as high as you safely can. Fellows have reported better results by getting an antenna just 10 or 15' higher. Try to get antennas out of the way of obstructions. This is especially important as you move higher in frequency. If you can do it, step up to a 7, 9, 11 element beam, instead of a shorter one. Remember it's all about more decibels. The longer the boom, the higher the gain. For best results in a contest, as well as general weak-signal VHF hamming, you want horizontally polarized antennas. 80-90% of V/UHF contesting activity is on SSB/CW, using horizontal antennas. Making a horizontal loop for a given band is a cost-effective way to hear farther on SSB. It's not as good as a yagi, because loops are omnidirectional. But you don't have to rotate them, and sometimes you hear things with a loop that you wouldn't with a beam pointed in the wrong direction. It's all about having options.

# RARA Family Picnic

Remember, mark your calendar and put aside Sunday, August 22nd for the RARA annual Family Picnic.

It will be held at Alpine Park, Shelter #1. Time 11:30 am until 1:30 pm. Bring your own place settings and a dish to pass. Chicken will be the main entrée. We will also supply pop and coffee. Each member will be contacted to find out if you will attend and how many in your party will attend. This will help the Club to more accurately plan for the event.



## SWAPFEST '10

The South Milwaukee Amateur Radio Club Inc.

\*\*\* SATURDAY, July 10th, 2010 --- 6:00AM \*\*\*

This is our 44th year!  
This Fest Is Dedicated to Verne Teske W9RYA

**American Legion Post #434**

**9327 S. Shepard Ave**

**Oak Creek, Wi. 53154**

**Tickets: \$5.00**

**Food & Beverages available after 6:00AM**

**This is an outside event -- Come prepared for ANY weather**

Talk-in Freq:  
146.52 S [WA9TXE]  
And Local Repeaters

For More Info  
e-mail:  
WB9TIK@sbcglobal net

Or Call:  
1-414-764-3871  
Ask for Robert

Prizes:  
Grand Prize  
\$100 @ noon

# KARSFEST 2010



27th ANNUAL HAMFEST  
THE KANKAKEE AREA RADIO SOCIETY

**SUNDAY JULY 18, 2010**

AMATEUR RADIO • ELECTRONICS • COMPUTERS  
ARRL Reps • Presentations • VE Testing

## Tickets

Double Stub / Advance \$6.00  
Single Stub / Gate \$8.00  
- Children under 12 FREE -  
First Indoor Table \$10.00  
Additional Tables \$8.00 Ea

## Set-Up

INDOOR VENDOR  
Saturday Set-Up 6PM - 8PM  
Sunday Set-Up, 6AM - 8AM  
FLEAMARKET  
Sunday Set-Up 6:00 AM  
RV PARKING SAT OVERNIGHT  
Free / \$20 with electric

Gates open at 6:00 AM Sunday  
Indoor Vendor Sales Begin on  
**Sunday at 8:00 AM**



**ARRL VE TESTING**  
DXCC, WAS, VUCC, CQ  
QSL Card Checkers

## Talk-In

W9AZ Rptr 146.94 U 107.2PL  
APRS Bcn 144.39 HFEST-18  
GPS 41:19:32.7 N  
87:47:42.4 W

E-Mail Questions to K9CS at  
[karsfest@live.com](mailto:karsfest@live.com)  
Vendors Phone: (815) 473-4263

For Ticket and Table Requests,  
send check along with SASE  
to: CARL SCHROEDER K9CS  
1505 N 2000 East Rd  
WATSEKA, IL 60970

Additional info available on the KARS web site at:

**WWW.W9AZ.COM**

14,400 sq ft AIR CONDITIONED BUILDING - SIX GIANT COVERED PAVILLIONS

**WILL COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS**

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**PEOTONE, ILLINOIS**

## AMATEUR RADIO EXAM NOTICE

June 19th there were 5 applicants resulting in 3 new licenses and 2 upgrades

### New License

David Burns, Technician  
William Lund, Technician  
Phillip Loughran, General

### Upgrades

Bill Erdman, KC9SON, General  
Kenneth Olson, N9KMO, Extra

Northern Illinois Volunteer Examiners will be holding the next Amateur Radio exam session in Rockford, IL on Saturday, July 17, 2010.

### 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 til 10:30 AM.

### What You Need To Bring To A W5YI-VEC Session

1. Your original Amateur License (unexpired or within the 2 year grace period) and a copy to attach to the paperwork.
2. Any valid CSCE that you are using for credit. Again the VE's have to see the original and have a copy to attach to the paperwork.
3. Two forms of Identification with your signature on them. One must be a picture ID (drivers license, passport, school ID, library card, credit card, etc.)
4. Test Fee \$14.00 cash or check. (please make checks payable to W5YI-VEC)

### Contact Information

Randy Scott, W9HL  
W9HL@arrl.net  
815-877-4328

## FRIDAY MORNING BREAKFAST

Meets every Friday morning from 8 am until about 9:30 am. An informal gathering of ham folks, no affiliations necessary, good food and good company.

*Everyone is welcome to attend.*

***"The Stockholm Inn"***  
***2420 Charles Street***  
***Rockford, IL 61108***



### Editors Note

If you would like to have something published, please call me or email me at [ke9n@arrl.net](mailto:ke9n@arrl.net).

**Cut-off for the August 2010 Hamrag will be Friday, July 30, 2010**

Kurt - KE9N, Editor



## ITEMS FOR SALE

1. Belden #9258 (RG-8X) \$0.25 / foot (between 300-400 feet available on the roll)
2. Gin pole parts – tower clamp, 2 pulleys and assorted clamps & toggles. \$50 for all.
3. Bucket with miscellaneous stuff, assorted insulators, 2 short pieces of coax & a commercial ground clamp. \$5 for whole bucket.
4. Ten-Tec Electronic Keyer KR-20A. (ac powered iambic paddle) \$30.
5. Mattco PX1000 watt/swr meter, \$15.

(The above 5 items can be viewed and purchased at the July 9<sup>th</sup> RARA meeting. They were donated to the club with funds going to the club.)

Cushcraft 17 element 2M boomer antenna. If interested contact Gene, KA9BOD, for further information. [ka9bod@arrl.net](mailto:ka9bod@arrl.net)

## UPCOMING CONTESTS

RSGB Islands on the Air (IOTA) Contest, 1200Z Saturday July 24 to 1200Z Sunday July 25, 2010

CQ WW DX Contest, RTTY, September 25-26, 2010

CQ WW DX Contest, SSB, October 30-31, 2010

CQ WW DX Contest, CW, November 27-28, 2010

**Note:** Source for this column include the NG3K website. Information submitted by Kurt - KE9N

### AREA Repeaters

146.610 -	ENC/DEC pl 114.8	W9AXD
147.000 +	ENC/DEC pl 114.8	W9AXD
223.880 -	ENC/DEC pl 118.8	W9AXD
<b>ATV</b> input 1250 Mhz/ 434 Mhz		W9ATN
	output 421.25 Mhz	
146.805 -	ENC/DEC pl 114.8	K9AMJ
224.440 -	ENC/DEC pl 118.8	K9AMJ
147.255 +	ENC/DEC pl 114.8	WX9MCS
444.725 +	ENC/DEC pl 107.2	WX9MCS
	Linked to FISHFAR	

### 2010 RARA Officers and Board

#### **Officers:**

President - Gordon Seaman, KC9NEX, 815-234-5034  
Vice President - Gene Stankiewicz, KA9BOD, 815-226-1806  
Secretary - Al Fischer, KD9CA, 815-885-3926  
Treasurer - Paul Franklin, K9RNR, 815-298-2251

#### **Directors:**

Shari Harlan, N9SH, 815-398-2683  
John Lawrence, N9OTC, 815-397-4624  
Tom Shouler, N9VJU, 815-877-9129  
Steve Thorne, K9LLI, 815-399-9161  
Web Master - Robert Larson, KC9ICH, 815-226-1875  
Ham Rag Editor - Kurt Eversole, KE9N, 815-389-2784  
Repeater Chairman - Chuck Ingle, AB9KA, 815-979-1049

**RARA BOARD MEETING MEETS ON THE LAST TUESDAY OF THE MONTH AT 7 PM**  
**St. Anthony Medical Center 5666 E. State St. Rockford, IL**



P.O. Box 8465, Rockford, IL 61126

Website: www.w9axd.org

E-mail: ke9n@arrl.net

Nets

Monday 8 PM	RARA Info.	146.610 - 114.8
Thursday 7 PM	ARES	147.195 + 114.8
Thursday 8 PM	SATERN	146.610 - 114.8

place address label here

# July 2010

## ROCKFORD AMATEUR RADIO ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Single Adult: \$25.00 Adult w/Family: \$30.00  
 Single Senior: \$15.00 Senior w/Family: \$20  
 Student: \$15.00

Above rate includes the RARA monthly newsletter, Ham Rag, via email.

Ham Rag Via U.S. Postal Service: \$12.00 extra

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Call Sign \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Work Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Renewal \_\_\_\_\_ New \_\_\_\_\_ Retired \_\_\_\_\_

Radio Interests \_\_\_\_\_

Other Interests \_\_\_\_\_

Suggestions: \_\_\_\_\_

RETURN COMPLETED FORM TO:

ROCKFORD AMATEUR RADIO ASSOCIATION  
 P.O. BOX 8465  
 ROCKFORD, ILLINOIS 61126