

# 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>

February 2004

## Larry Snyder, KOHKM 2003 Ham of Year

This year's Ham of the Year is Larry Snyder, KOHNM. Last summer while he was visiting the RARA Field Day site we had a conversation about the focus of the club. Larry took this to heart as he created a survey and sent it out to members and non-members to see where the club could go to make it better. Let me quote some of the comments from the nominations that the committee received.



Larry was instrumental in putting the club back together with his survey. I feel it was the biggest step forward in working with the membership in 2003.

Larry has spent so much of his time and effort in the club that it amazes me. Everything that he is doing to make the club better is great. From the

*(Continued on page 3)*

## The next meeting is at 7:00 pm February 13, 2004

The program for this month's meeting will be:

### A 60 min video called "A52A Bhutan 2000 DXpedition "

*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.

## New Rates For Club Dues

The new dues schedule is as follows:

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

With the increased costs of maintaining the repeaters, insurance, newsletter and other incurred costs the BOD reluctantly voted to increase dues for the first time in 5 years. These rates started on January 1, 2004.

Welcome to some little crater somewhere in the Meridiani Planum of Mars.  
This 360 degree panorama was taken by the Opportunity Rover which landed on January 24.



## Presidents Log February 2004

I hope everyone is weathering the cold temperatures this winter. Hopefully the cold spell will not last long.

The meeting this month should be interesting. I enjoy hearing about DXpeditions and thinking about what it would have been like to be along for the ride. The video is about an hour long I am told.

Shari, N9SH, will discuss the ARRL's proposal for restructuring of amateur radio licensing if there is time.

One thing that we have had good comments about is that we have had drinks and cookies or something at our break at recent meetings. We will try and do that from now on, taking turns as to who brings what or getting a volunteer that will commit to doing it for a period of time. We will put out a basket to collect donations that we hope that will cover the costs. If not, the balance will come from the club, not the pocket of the one that brings it in.

At our January board meeting there was discussion about whether we should have Field Day or not. Personally, I feel we should have Field Day, even though it might be a small turnout. Field Day means different things to different people and, to me that is OK. There are those that like to have it be a serious contest, those that like to visit and those that like to do the different modes that people do not see every day. I remember two years ago when Dave Kennedy, W9WXR, was able to work the International Space Station. I know that one contact made the whole weekend for him, and it did for me too. Others have done PSK-31, Slow Scan TV, Amateur Television and other modes in addition to the CW and SSB. I find it interesting to be able to

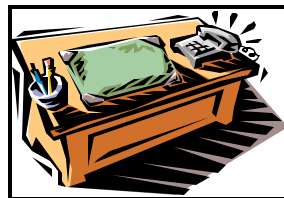
show the different modes to the visitors. We need a combination of all types for Field Day and our club has those types. At the meeting we will discuss if we will have Field Day or not as it has cost us about \$250 a year to do this event. The board would like to know that we will have support before committing to the funding. Come and express your opinion and I hope that you will agree that it would be a shame not to do it.

Do you have ideas that you would like to see for club meetings. We are looking at the questionnaires that we had you fill out last year but always willing to listen to new ideas. Contact Scott Allshouse, KB9YRW, or Gary Hilker, K9LJN, with your suggestions as they are putting together the meeting content this year.

Bob Davidson, WA9NTT, is heading up a recruiting committee and is going to approach people that do not currently belong to RARA. It is important that we give Bob all the support that we can, including offering to help make phone calls, send post cards or whatever Bob decides the proper avenue should be. If you want to help, pick up the phone and call him NOW!

Other committee positions are open as well, and we will have a list at the meeting. Take a look at the list and see if there is a position that you would enjoy. We won't fill all positions as there were many ideas as to what we could do. Positions that are not filled will be kept and filled when someone is ready, not by twisting arms. As the organization grows, empty spots will fill in by themselves. Those that the membership does not feel are as important will just have to wait.

We had to file some paperwork with the State of Illinois before proceeding with the



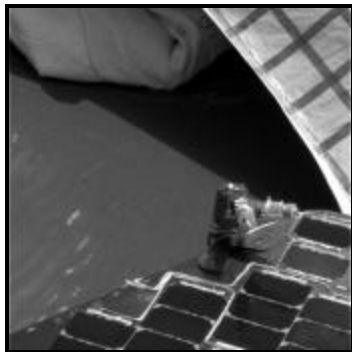
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## THE BPL FIGHT: FCC'S ABERNATHY ACKNOWLEDGES AMATEUR RADIO BPL CONCERNS

Here at home, FCC Commissioner Kathleen Q. Abernathy is apparently shifting away from her definition of BPL as a "Broadband Nirvana." Last week Abernathy specifically cited Amateur Radio concerns about the interference potential of Broadband Over Power Line in remarks she delivered to the Catholic University of America's Columbus School of Law.

According to the ARRL Letter, Abernathy said BPL should not be widely deployed before dealing with ham radio's interference fears. She admitted that she now recognizes that Amateur Radio licensees have raised concerns about the potential for harmful interference. Abernathy described this as something that will have to be addressed before any mass market deployment can occur.

Commissioner Abernathy made her remarks on January 22 at the school's Washington, DC campus. Abernathy said that if engineers can find a way to prevent harmful interference to other radio services, BPL would represent a tremendous advance for consumers, because it could bring broadband to any home that has electric power delivery. (ARRL)



This is a photo taken with the right panorama camera on the Opportunity Rover. Is this a picture of a new life form or some NASA engineers humor on an actual component?

*(Continued from page 1)*

survey to stepping up to take a position on the Board of Directors.

Always supportive of the club. Has done a lot of work behind the scene to give direction to what the club is doing.

Hand's down Larry deserves this due to his skills of being a moderator and peace maker. Also he went out of his way to developed a member survey and painstakingly worked to distribute it, analyze it and then went on to create an action plan to implement it in the club, and he continues to nurse it to make RARA a better club.

These comments are some of the ones that helped the committee make a decision that we are very proud of. Congratulations Larry on being named the 2003 Rockford Amateur Radio Association's Radio Amateur of the Year.

Shari Harlan - N9SH  
ARRL Illinois Section Manager

*(Continued from page 2)*

formal 501(c)3 application. That has all been completed now and the paperwork for the 501(c)3 will be filled out shortly. Remember that we are technically a 501(c)3 corporation right now, and donations may be tax deductible (contact your local tax advisor). The reason for the formal application is that we would not be considered by organizations that give grants unless we have the "official" stamp. I do not see that we should have any problems as I have gone over what other clubs have, and we are right in line with the requirements.

See you at the meeting!

73 - Gene Harlan - WB9MMM

**Minutes for the Awards Dinner Meeting  
on Jan 9<sup>th</sup>, 2004.**

Meeting was called to order by President Harlan, WB9MMM at 8:10 PM

The secretary report of December was not read at the meeting.

The treasurer's report was read by Carl Cacciatore, W9TQ, motion to accept by Shari Harlan N9SH, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Larry Snyder, K0HNM. Motion carried.

President Harlan announced the upcoming classes at Rock Valley College the Technician Class in February and the General Class in March.

Larry Snyder, K0HNM, thanked Mary, KC9AKC, and John, KA9SOG, Auerswald for the great job setting up the dinner for this year.

President Harlan welcomed our special guest Wayne Hansen, KA9IMX, to the dinner.

President Harlan thanked the Board of Directors for there service to the club in 2003.

The awards committee Shari Harlan N9SH and Nick Lager KB9SKW presented the following awards:

February	Mike Oberg, AB9AY, for teaching the Technicians Class
April	Shari Harlan, N9SH, for the Heritage Run
May	Gene Harlan, WB9MMM, and Carl Cacciatore, W9TQ, for the Chautauqua Midway Village presentation
May	Shari Harlan, N9SH, for the March of Dimes Walk America
May	Eric Hultgren, N9MCS, for the Y95 Walk and Run
May	Mark Broman, N9CNW, for the Boy Scouts PPP
June	John Birly, AA9SK, Field Day Chairman
June	Mark Broman, N9CNW, for the Ramp Wheel A Thon
July	Gene Harlan, WB9MMM, for the

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.*

	State Street Mile
Sept.	John Birly, AA9SK, On the Water front Chairman
Oct.	Mike Oberg, AB9AY, for teaching the Technicians Class
Oct.	Shari Harlan, N9SH, for the Boy Scout Jamboree On The Air
Oct.	Wendy Owano, KC9BCF, and Shari Harlan, N9SH, for the Nominating Committee.
Nov.	Gene Harlan, WB9MMM, for teaching the Extra and General upgrade class

The following awards were also presented:

Herb Eckstein, K9AMJ	Truck and Repeater Chairman
Randy Scott, W9HL	VE Testing
Scott Allshouse, KB9YRW	President
John Auerswald, KA9SOG	Vice President
Wendy Owano, KC9BCF	Secretary
Rich Ludwig, K9PK	Treasurer
John Birly, AA9SK	Board of Directors
Larry Snyder, K0HNM	Board of Directors
Gary Hilker, K9LJN	Board of Directors
Shari Harlan, N9SH	Board of Directors
John Auerswald, KA9SOG	Ham Rag Editor

Ham of the Year for 2003 Award was presented to Larry Snyder, K0HNM.

Thank you also goes to Mark Broman, N9CNW, for the great job making the plaque.

Motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Scott Allshouse, KB9YRW, and 2<sup>nd</sup> by Dick Fleming, KC9BCB, motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Scott Allshouse, KB9YRW  
Vice President



## SCHEDULED DXPEDITIONS

CALL SIGN	QTH	When	QSL via
CE9R	South Shetland	now to Feb 24	CE3HDI
FM/F5FUA/p	Martinique	now to Feb 24	French REF BURO
J6DX/J68AS	St. Lucia	now to Feb 25	N9AG
AY1ZA	South Orkney	now to Feb 29	LU4DXU
ZK3??	Tokelau	Feb 13 – 25	I2YSB
VK9LB & VK9LL	Lord Howe	Feb 16 – 27	DL7AFS
HI9/N7OU	Dominican Re- public	Feb 17 – 26	N7OU
FS5UQ	St. Martin	Feb 18 – 24	W7RJ
P40W	Aruba	Feb 18 – 24	N2MM
C6ASB	Bahamas	Feb 19 – 28	AK0M
PJ2T	Netherlands An- tilles	Feb 19 – 24	N9AG
VP9/W6PH	Bermuda	Feb 19 – 24	W6PH
FM/F5MNV	Martinique	Feb 21 to March 6	F5MNV
6Y5Z	Jamaica	Feb 28 to March 14	W9IU
VK9NB & VK9NG	Norfolk Island	Feb 29 to March 13	DL7AFS
T32I	Eastern Kiribati	March 1 – 8	KH6GMP
T32BI	Eastern Kiribati	March 1 – 8	KH6DFW



Here is our little friend again, but this time he is seen here on the Sprit Rover near the medium gain antenna. Sprits tracks can be seen also.



Has anybody seen this new mobile in town?

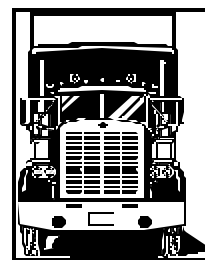
**Recently Heard/Worked DX  
From the Rockford Area**

<b>Callsign</b>	<b>QTH</b>	<b>QSL VIA</b>
3DA0DX	Swaziland	ZS5WI
4U1ITU	ITU Geneva	BURO
A35RE	Tonga	HA8IB
A61X	United Arab Emirate	N1DG
C21HC	Nauru	DL9HCU
CN8YZ	Morocco	EA7FTR
D2BB	Angola	W3HMK
HC1MD	Ecuador	K8LJG
J28XX	Djibouti	DL2JRM
JW5RIA	Svalbard	LA5RIA
KG4AS	Guantanamo Bay	N4SIA
S9SS	Sao Tome	N4JR
TJ1GA	Cameroon	IK2AQZ
TN3S	Congo	CT3HK
TR0B	Gabon	F4EGS
TY5ZR	Benin	DIRECT
VP8KF	Falkland Is.	G3VPW
YA1BV	Afghanistan	JA1PBV
YI9ZF	Iraq	SM1TDE
Z22JE	Zimbabwe	K3PD
ZB2FK	Gibraltar	DIRECT

**ENFORCEMENT:  
UPS TO THE FCC:  
YOU HAVE OUR FULL  
COOPERATION**

The FCC has received a letter from United Parcel Service offering the company's full cooperation in removing any unlicensed radio equipment from its nationwide fleet. This follows a January 7th letter to the Middlesburg, Ohio office of UPS detailing unlicensed 10 meter operations coming from delivery vehicles in that area.

The FCC also has contacted another trucking company, R & L Transfer of Norwalk, Ohio regarding the same type of problem. Unlicensed operators coming to the 10 meter band has been a growing problem around the world in recent years. (FCC)



***RARA Officers for 2004***

**President:** Gene Harlan WB9MMM  
**Vice President:** Scott Allshouse KB9YRW  
**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**

**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.  
Please submit any articles before  
the 1st of each month.**



## DX Tips by Gary Hilker, K9LJN

Pay special attention to the HF/LF bands (10 – 160 Meters) on the week before and after a major operating contest. Many experienced contesters go on Dxpeditions (to foreign countries) in order to operate these contests and are generally easy to contact while they are preparing their stations for the contest or casually operating afterwards.

The next major contests coming up are the ARRL DX-CW Contest (Feb 21-22) and ARRL DX-SSB Contest (March 6-7). The purpose of these contests is for the world to contact the USA and Canada. Generally, you can add several countries to your DXCC total if band conditions are favorable during a contest.

The ARRL DX Contest exchange for the USA and Canada is to give a signal report and state/province (599 IL). The rest of the world's contest exchange is to give a signal report and their transmitter power (599 100). Good luck (GL) and I hope to hear you on the bands.

# T H E 2 0 0 4 A N N U A L A W A R D S D I N N E R



More pictures can be found on the club Web Site: <http://rara.tripod.com>

## The Trouble with RFID by SIMSON L. GARFINKEL

On November 15, fifteen privacy and consumer organizations called for manufacturers to voluntarily hold off on their plans to equip consumer goods with wireless tracking devices. These devices, called Radio Frequency Identification tags, are based on the same technology that lets cars pay E-ZPASS tolls without stopping. The fear of these activists is simple: They're worried that instead of being used to track boots, bluejeans and books, these so-called RFID systems will be used to track us.

RFID isn't a household word today, but within the next few years manufacturers hope to put it into many household products. Last January Gillette ordered 500 million RFID chips from a California manufacturing firm called Alien Technology; Gillette plans to put the tags into packages of its razors and blades so that the high-value consumer goods can be tracked as they move from the factory through distribution and eventually to the store shelf. Last March Benetton announced similar plans to weave RFID tags into its designer clothes; the company reversed itself after a grassroots consumer group launched a worldwide boycott of Benetton products.

As its name implies, RFID systems are based on radio waves. Each tag is equipped with a tiny radio transmitter: When it "hears" a special radio signal from a reader, the tag responds by sending its own unique serial number through the air. This wireless technology could save American businesses billions of dollars. With RFID readers at the loading docks and on the store shelves, retailers could know precisely how many packages of, say, lipstick had been received and how many had been put on the shelves. And once every product in the store is equipped with an RFID tag, stores might even be able to have an automated checkout: Shoppers could just push their carts through a doorway and have all the items in the cart automatically totaled and charged to the RFID-enabled credit card in their pocket.

Both Wal-Mart and the US military have already told their hundred largest suppliers that cartons and pallets must be equipped with unique RFID tags by January 2005. Meanwhile, MasterCard and American Express have been testing RFID-enabled credit cards. Mobil has been pushing its RFID-based "Speedpass" since 1997. And most high-end cars now come with RFID "immobilizer" circuits that won't let the cars start unless the correct RFID-enabled car key is in the ignition.

So why did the American Civil Liberties Union, the Electronic Frontier Foundation, The World Privacy Forum and a dozen other organizations ask for a voluntary moratorium on RFID technology in consumer goods? Because this use of RFID could enable an omnipresent police surveillance state, it could erode further what's left of consumer privacy and it could make identity theft even easier than it has already become.

RFID is such a potentially dangerous technology because RFID chips can be embedded into products and clothing and covertly read without our knowledge. A small tag embedded into the heel of a shoe or the in seam of a leather jacket for inventory control could be activated every time the customer entered or left the store where the item was bought; that tag could also be read by any other business or government agency that has installed a compatible reader. Unlike today's anti-theft tags, every RFID chip has a unique serial number. This means that stores could track each customer's comings and goings. Those readers could also register the RFID tags that we're already carrying in our car keys and the "prox cards" that some office buildings use instead of keys.

The problem here is that RFID tags can be read through your wallet, handbag, or clothing. It's not hard to build a system that automatically reads the proximity cards, the keychain RFID "immobilizer" chips, or other RFID-enabled devices of every person who enters a store. A store could build a list of every window shopper or person who walks through the front door by reading these tags and then looking up their owners' identities in a centralized database. No such database exists today, but one could easily be built.

Indeed, such warnings might once have been dismissed as mere fear-mongering. But in today's post-9/11 world, in which the US government has already announced its plans to fingerprint and photograph foreign visitors to our country, RFID sounds like a technology that could easily be seized upon by the Homeland Security Department in the so-called "war on terrorism." But such a system wouldn't just track suspected Al Qaeda terrorists: it would necessarily track everybody -- at least potentially.

Despite these fears, the privacy activists aren't saying that RFID technology should be abandoned. As it is, the technology is already in broad use currently for the tracking of pharmaceuticals (and the elimination of dangerous drug counterfeits), for tracking shipments of meat (so that contaminated batches can be rapidly identified and destroyed) and even for tracking manufactured goods to deter theft and assist in inventory control.

But companies that are pushing RFID tags into our lives should adopt rules of conduct: There should be an absolute ban on hidden tags and covert readers. Tags should be "killed" when products are sold to consumers. And this technology should never be used to secretly unmask the identity of people who wish to remain anonymous.

I was proud to be one of the people endorsing the position statement on the use of RFID in consumer products. If companies do not voluntarily abide by these principles, we should push to have them incorporated into the laws that protect our privacy rights at the state and federal level.



## AO-40 AILING

Ground controllers for the AO-40 satellite are trying to figure out just what happened to cause a significant drop in the spacecraft's bus voltage, taking it off the air. The satellite remains silent in the wake of a precipitous voltage drop from around 26 volts down to 18 volts early on January 27 (UTC). AO-40 controllers are fairly certain that one or more shorted battery cells are at the root of the problem. Efforts to restart the satellite's 2.4-GHz downlink transmitter have been unsuccessful.

"Our current best understanding is that we suffered a catastrophic failure of the main battery, which is clamping the bus voltage at a low level," Stacey Mills, W4SM, of the AO-40 command team said in a posting on the AMSAT-DL Web site.

The AO-40 satellite was the result of AMSAT's ambitious international Phase 3D project. The AMSAT-NA Board of Directors met January 29 to review the current situation. "The next few weeks will be of great interest as the satellite is entering into a sun angle which is becoming increasingly favorable for charging the batteries," said AMSAT-NA President Robin Haighton, VE3FRH. Tests are under way on spare batteries in AMSAT's Orlando, Florida, lab in an effort to simulate the failure mode and determine what might be done to recover the satellite.

"At this time, AMSAT engineers and scientists are optimistic about the chances of recovering but—like the NASA Spirit problem—this may take some time to accomplish," Haighton said.

The AO-40 ground team has been sending blind commands to the spacecraft to activate its onboard computerized control system in order to switch in the auxiliary battery bank, which was tied to the main battery bank after a bus voltage drop January 26, and disconnect the main battery.

Mills said that while ground controllers don't claim to fully understand what happened aboard AO-40, operator practices were not to blame. "AO-40 was designed to withstand all that you can throw at it," he said.

Mills explained that the main AO-40 batteries consist of 20 40-Ah cells arranged on three of the radial support arms inside the spacecraft—two packs of seven cells and one pack of six cells.

"It is entirely possible or even probable that the main batteries suffered some damage during the 400-N motor event," Mills said, referring to the onboard catastrophic incident that caused AO-40 to go dark less than a month after its November 2000 launch.

## THE NEXT AMATEUR RADIO EXAM SESSION IS

### FEBRUARY 21, 2004

**Location of testing has been Changed  
New Location is:**

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

*Enter at the main entrance turn right at the  
desk walk to end of hall.*

*The St. Francis Room is the corner room on  
the right.*

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 2004 is \$12.00.

Walk-ins welcome.

While some systems were irreparably damaged, ground controllers were able to get AO-40 partially up and running again, and the satellite's transponders have been in active use since 2001. It was subsequently determined that an anomaly involving a fuel valve essentially had caused an onboard explosion. AO-40 had been operating with 435 MHz and 1.2 GHz uplinks and a 2.4 GHz downlink and beacon.

"If it's at all possible to bring AO-40 back, we will," said Mills, who concedes that he's "lived and breathed AO-40" for more than four years.

"No success for even weeks or months does not mean that we won't eventually be successful. We will sure keep trying." (ARRL)

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

Shari Harlan, N9SH, Bob Davison, WA9NTT,  
Gary Hilker, K9LJN, Rich Ludwig, W9PK, Jim  
Miller, W4JR and finally NASA and the JPL Labs.

**Rockford Amateur  
Radio Association, Inc.**

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Web Site - <http://rara.tripod.com>

**Its Time to  
Renew Your  
Dues for 2004**

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**February 2004**

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

