

# HAM RAG

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

Rockford Amateur Radio Association, inc

## JUNE 2005

### 2005 FIELD DAY STATUS

Due to several family medical situations with Gene KA9BOD, Frank KS9X, Dick KC9BCB and a last minute family commitment for Tim KC9DNN, who were key organizers for this years field day, it is looking like RARA participation this year will be severely limited.

**The situation was discussed at the RARA board meeting on 5/31/05 and it was decided that an effort will be made to see if anyone will come forward to setup and operate stations at field day. If you would like to volunteer to organize a station, please call Bill WB9MCZ because we still have Alpine Park areas 6 & 7 available to us for June 25 & 26, field day weekend.**

**If no one comes forward by the deadline on June 11 at the Breakfast in the Park, the RARA field day will be cancelled.** Arrangements have been made to recover the \$50 reservation fee for the two area's that are reserved if the decision is to cancel.

RARA board members at 5/31/2005 meeting.

### Presidents Corner - JUNE 2005

Prez. Sez. **For the month of June** - - Our regular Fri. meeting has been rescheduled for the following day, Sat June 11. We will have it during the "**Breakfast in the Park**" The time for the breakfast is 0700 - 1200 hrs. Alpine Park, same area as last year. (Shelter # 1)

**HELP!!** We're running into some snags. Dick Fleming while attending to his own medical needs, now has his wife to help. She recently fell from the back porch onto the patio. In doing so it took seven staples to close the wound and she suffered a concussion. He has also had several cancellations from people who were going to set up stations for different bands.

Two others have wives that will be undergoing surgeries on the day before Field Day. Another will be out of town until later on Sat. evening.

If you want to help with one of the stations or the organizing of Field Day please call me at 654-9590 or 543-6338. If we don't get any help, then Field Day will have to be cancelled. (Please see note above in 2005 Field Day Status.)

Thanks to Jim Conrad for giving our last month program..

Congratulations to Tim Peterson KC9DNN who passed his Extra Class test earlier this month.

Remember, we will need a lot of help coming up for Waterfront. Labor Day Weekend.

73 Bill WB9MCZ

#### Inside this issue:

Presidents notes	1
Field Day status	
VP notes	2
Meeting minutes	2
Community event DXpeditions	3/4
James Conrad 8 yrs on high seas	5
VE testing	6
Letter to the editor	
RARA Officers & Board members	7
Upcoming events and items for sale	7

#### NEXT MEETING

**Saturday, June 11, 2005**

The program for this month's meeting will be:

**BREAKFAST IN THE PARK**  
(0700-1200)

**LOCATION**  
ALPINE PARK  
SHELTER # 1  
Rockford, IL

Alpine Park is just south of the corner of Alpine Rd and State St. Enter park off of Alpine Rd and take first left as you go into the park, go up the hill to shelter #1.

## From the desk of the Vice President...

Mmmmm...Bacon... Yes, this month is "Breakfast in the park." Food goes down better when it tastes good. Not to say anything bad about our great Chefs, they really do a great job. But to drive a point. Ham Radio (no pun intended) also goes down better when it tastes good. Nothing is more frustrating when there are inconsiderate operators using poor practices. With everything that is at Stake (or Steak), ALL of us have to make sure that we are above reproach in everything we do. Live by the "Golden Rule," and practice good engineering. If we do this, and the community know's who we are, and why we are here, we would be in a much better situation. We all should put forth an effort to reclaim the great reputation we once had. Please make sure that Ham Radio are not words your neighbor "Chokes" on.

Tim KC9DNN

## Secretary's Report

**Rockford Amateur Radio Association  
May 13, 2005 General Meeting Minutes  
St. Anthony Medical Center, Rockford IL.**

The May 13, 2005 RARA meeting was called to order by President Bill Peters, WB9MCZ, at 7:07 P. M.

Shari Harlan, N9SH, moved that the minutes of the April meeting be approved as printed in the Ham-rag. Seconded by Chuck Liljegen, WB9UMC. Motion carried.

The Treasurer's report was read by Carl Cacciatore, W9TQ. Chuck Liljegen, WB9UMC, moved the treasurer's report be approved as read, seconded by Shari Harlan, N9SH. Motion carried.

Old Business:

Carl has the 2005 membership cards for all those who have paid their 2005 dues.

Carl also announced that the Technician class will be the last two weekends in October at Rock Valley College.

New Business:

Bill WB9MCZ, started off with a round of "Meet Your Neighbor."

Jim Miller, W4JR, announced that there would be a text messaging verses Morse code contest on the Tonight Show that evening.

Gary Hilker, K9LJN, announced that WB0FG was a WAS award winner. (Worked all States)

Shari, N9SH, announced the upcoming hamfests: Dayton, Springfield on June 4, Princeton on June 4 and 5, Peotone (Six Meter Club) on June 12.

Herb, K9AMJ and Bill WB9MCZ reported on the general condition of the repeaters and the finances to have them repaired. Both are back on the air.

Gary Hilker, K9LJN moved that the meeting be adjourned, seconded by Shari Harlan, N9SH. Meeting was adjourned.

Following the break a program was presented by Jim Conrad, W8MQ, who spent 8 years aboard a 42 foot ketch sailing around the Caribbean.

Respectfully,

Tim Peterson, KC9DNN, Acting Secretary

## On the WATERFRONT Fundraiser

RARA involvement is manning a ticket booth in which the volunteers work in 4 hour shifts.

Please contact Scott W9SBA or Bill WB9MCZ if you can help.

**FRIDAY MORNING BREAKFAST**— Meets every Friday morning from 8 am until about 9:30 am at the **Morning Glory Restaurant**, 408 7th St, Rockford (An informal gathering of ham folks, no affiliations necessary, good food and good company. Everyone is welcome to attend.)

# Literacy Council's Half Marathon Race Saturday May 21, 2005

## Amateur Radio Community Involvement

Each month the Ham Rag has a column on SPECIAL COMMUNITY EVENTS. As stated in the column, this is an opportunity to use our communication skills to help other local groups. When I received the report of the latest event, I thought it would be a good example of what we do. Everyone is encouraged to help out at any one of the events.

### Event Overview

This year was the second time the Rockford Literacy Council has sponsored this race. (A Half Marathon is 13+ miles in length). The Rockford course starts at Jefferson High School on the south side of Rockford, goes south on 35th street to Blackhawk Road, east on Blackhawk then through 3 Kishwaukee River Forest preserves and back to Jefferson H.S. There are both runners and walkers in the event. Amateur radio operators are placed at race check points and pass normal and emergency traffic as needed by the race coordinators and check point personnel. Wayne KA9IMX coordinated the amateur operators for the event and wrote up a summary of what everyone did.

Gene KA9BOD—Ham Rag Editor

Good Morning,

Thank you for helping out with Literacy Council's Half Marathon. The folks in charge were very appreciative of our efforts. There were over 300 runners and walkers in this event, and the first one finished in 1 hour and 12 minutes!! I don't think I could have bicycled it that fast!! (Without being sore for 3 days) The last walker came in at around 4 hours 20 minutes. Still, everyone was out of there before Noon. Here is a brief rundown of who was where and some of the duties and operations they worked with. My personal thanks to everyone for doing a fine job!

At the Start/Finish line, Scott - W9SBA was running Net Control. Most of the time he was cross-banding from 440 on his HT to his truck where it was retransmitted on 147.000. When we began to run into some interference problems, he side-stepped the problem by switching the mobile unit to transmit on the output of the repeater, and kicked up the power so we all could hear him. It was a good idea and worked well.

Also at the Start/Finish line was Dan - KC9ATR. Dan was able to work cross-band through Scott's rig, which allowed him to cover the whole area with ease. Dan was following the various Event Officials and getting answers to the questions we had. He was also the person who gave the runner information we sent, to the proper officials, Ambulance/Medical contact person, and general "gopher". I understand Dan stayed pretty busy during the race running many of the messages himself.

John - N9OTC was at the corner of Blackhawk Road and 35th Street with a Winnebago County Sheriff's Deputy, and was our "Police" contact if needed. I believe John was able to run with the HT, but the nice thing was he was able to stay sitting in his car, with drinks and munchies at the ready. We had John run a few special checks and provide follow up reports on the end of the outbound walkers. John pulled double duty as all the runners and walkers had to come back by his location. John was the last to be released from his assigned location.

Bill - WB9MCZ was located at the entrance to Kishwaukee Gorge Forest Preserve. Bill was able to park his truck up close to the table, so once the bulk of runners were by, he could sit down in the shade and relax.. From the looks of things, Bill had some good looking company at that location.. so I don't think he sat in the truck as much as he would have, if I'd been there..

Gene - KA9BOD was unquestioningly, in the most confusing and hectic location of the Event.. the Main Aid Station. Gene was working cross-band, using 440 on the HT to a very nice emergency station set-up with a tripod and homemade copper J-pole antenna at about 15'. Gene's location was behind a hill, about 15' above river level, so the extra equipment made all the difference. The Main Aid Station was a key point where the racers passed 4 times! This means Gene was constantly having to keep track of the leaders and tail-enders the entire time.. kind of like manning 4 locations at once.. whew! Nice job Gene!

Jarrold - KC9CJY was situated in the southern most point of the race.. the West Loop in the Kishwaukee River Forest Preserve. This is one of the first Special Service Events in which Jarrold has participated with us. Jarrold was working cross-band, using 440 from his HT to his mobile where it went out to the repeater. (In true Ham spirit, both Jarrold and Gene were willing to share the access frequencies for cross-banding through their systems.) Jarrold was actually in the first location to be cleared. He was then asked to monitor for possible problems near the entrance to the Cherry Valley Fire Station, as they were having a major Extrication Competition. Then, when we realized we still hadn't heard from Barbara, he headed up and assisted there.

Barbara - KB9RWM was up Mulford Road (which is under construction) and was stationed at Black Hawk Springs where the path comes within feet of the parking areas. Unfortunately, we didn't find out until we had her on location, that the Water Stop

that was supposed to be there, was canceled at the last minute because of a lack of volunteers to man it! (And I thought we had trouble getting volunteers!) I must apologize to Barbara. Not only did she have to man the position alone, but in my haste to get to my position, I failed to make sure she was able to communicate with the group. It was my fault, not Barbara's, and I feel terrible about it. The race started before we were in position (but we DID get the start). When Barbara attempted a contact with her HT and couldn't, and I didn't give it another thought when she said it wouldn't be a problem as she could sit in the car and use her mobile. It was only much later, after I heard Chuck give a leader report, that I realized I hadn't heard from Barbara.. Thankfully, it was only a communications difficulty, and nothing else. My thanks to Jarrod for moving up to help her out and get her on the air via the cross-band.

Chuck - WB9UMC was farthest out at the east end of the path, way over at Perryville Road. I believe Chuck was able to work off the HT most of the time. I never got the chance to visit his site to see how things were set-up, but by the sounds of things, he integrated well with the staff as I heard him passing traffic regarding supplies as well as timely, accurate participant information.

I was at the end of the last loop. I was set-up in a comfortable position where I could track all the runners as they came by. Once things started to slow down a bit, I began to try to record all the numbers, (and occasional time). This was tougher than I thought!! I did get MOST of the last 187 people, and was able to give some information down stream, as to about how many were left to go. I did most of my work cross-band, running 440 from my HT to Jarrod, then when he moved, through Gene, and later went direct. I ran into an embarrassing problem.. I was in such a hurry to get things set-up, that I failed to ensure things were "properly" set-up. I left my doors open, (better audio) and didn't turn off the interior lights.. plus, I left the head lights on.. now, this is not normally a problem, as when I turn off the vehicle, the lights turn off after 20 seconds.. but.. NOT if you have the key in an "on" position!! Thank goodness the event folks at the turn around, were gracious enough to give me a jump!

As things wrapped up, I headed up to the School and chatted with the organizers and coordinators. I heard many good comments on the helpfulness of our people, the quality of communications and the assistance we were able to provide. I was honored to hear all the fine comments, and only wish I could have recorded them so all of you could hear them. I am so proud to have the opportunity to work with you!

One other note.. while we were speaking with the coordinators, Bill found out they had some special shirts.. and, thanks to his efforts, I now have a shirt for everyone, plus a nice metal bookmark as a thank-you from the folks at the Rockford Literacy Council. Please give me a call and I will make arrangements to meet you and get them to you.

Thank you very much for such a great job. It's an honor to work these kind of events with you, and I am looking forward to the chance to work with you again soon.

Sincerely, Wayne - KA9IMX

## SCHEDULED DXPEDITIONS

By K9LJN

CALLSIGN	QTH	WHEN	QSL VIA
A35PX	TONGA	NOW TO JUNE 7	AI5P
7Q7WW	MALAWI	NOW TO JUNE 9	KC4D
TK/F1PNR	CORSICA	NOW TO JUNE 28	F1PNR
C91EP	MOZAMBIQUE	NOW TO JULY 5	SM0EPU
TT8PK	CHAD	NOW TO JULY 20	F4EGS
VQ9OG	CHAGOS IS.	NOW TO 2006	W9ROG
5Z4ES	KENYA	NOW TO 2007	"5Z" BURO
CY9SS	ST. PAUL IS.	JUNE 7 TO JULY 7	???
TF3SYL	ICELAND	JUNE 10 - 20	"TF" BURO
HR9/K6JEN	HONDURAS	JUNE 18 - 30	K6JEN
HR9/W7AV	HONDURAS	JUNE 18 - 30	W7AV

**Note:** Sources for this column include the 425DXN, ARRL, NG3K and NJDXA websites.

**P.S. Six Meters has been open to Central America and stateside "E" skip**



## Jim Conrad W8MQ, 8 years with Ham Radio on the high seas

Our guest speaker for the May meeting was James Conrad W8MQ. Over the years he and his wife Alice had two passions, ham radio and sailing. They lived in Western Michigan where they had a 30' sail boat. After 10 years of sailing around Lake Michigan, Mr. Conrad and his wife were looking for a greater adventure. Their dream was to sail the Caribbean. James is an engineer and his wife Alice N8IKA is a teacher and at the time they had a 10 year old son, Jarred.

They decided to finance the adventure by selling everything they owned, house, boat, cars and most possessions, bought a van and loaded it with everything they felt they needed for the adventure and headed to the East Coast to buy a seagoing boat.

They started looking in Annapolis, MD and then went down the coast until they finally found a 2 year old, 42 foot, two mast sketch in Ft. Lauderdale, FL. James and Alice reworked the sketch to their liking with plenty of storage spaces, added marine navigation equipment and his trusty Icom 735. One of



James W8MQ with his trusty Icom 735. "This radio is part of my life, I could never sell it."

"boat" schooled Jarred through the American School of Correspondence out of Chicago.

Most of the sailing people are ham operators who have daily schedules and nets to meet and assist each other as they sail the seas. The Conrad's met many new friends and were able to visit while in port or in some cases they were invited to their homes. Ham radio was also used to keep in touch with family and friends back in Michigan consequently ham radio was their essential tool for all communications.

Many thousands of nautical miles and 8 years later, the Conrad family has left the sea and relocated to Oregon, IL which is the region that Alice came from. Thank you James for sharing this adventure with us.

Written by Gene KA9BOD and Bob WA9NTT



James pointing out the route of his many travels in the Caribbean Sea and beyond.

the mast cables was modified with insulators and became his antenna.

When they were finally ready to sail, they headed for the Bahamas as the first port of call. In order to get there, they had to cross the Gulf Stream which turned out to be the toughest leg of their trip because of the currents. Something they did not encounter in Lake Michigan.

From the Bahamas, they visited most of the many islands and countries in this part of the world going as far south as Venezuela. They also went through the Panama Canal up the west coast to Costa Rica and then back through the Panama Canal and into the Gulf of Mexico. At each of these places, they stayed for a few days or weeks depending on their whims. During this time they met many people from across the world and



This hat, like his Icom 735 was with James the whole trip!!

## AMATEUR RADIO EXAM NOTICE

May 21 there were 3 applicants resulting in 2 new Extras.

Timothy Peterson KC9DNN  
Joseph Cannova K9WIT

Northern Illinois Volunteer Examiners will be holding the next Amateur Radio exam session in Rockford, IL on Saturday, June 18, 2005.

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 until 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

## REPEATER AUTOPATCH CODES

Any RARA members wishing autopatch codes for the 146.610 repeater please email Carl W9TQ and he will give them to you.

Carl's email address is: w9tq@arrl.net

## FROM THE LOCAL NEWSPAPER

ROCKFORD REGISTER STAR  
Tuesday May 3, 2005  
Letters to the editor.

### Your Views

WHAT READERS HAVE TO SAY

#### Rockford looks better

My family and I visited Rockford last week to see my parents. I've been back about every five years since 1973, when I left the Forest City to seek my fortune.

The Rockford I experienced on this visit looks better than it has for a long time. Charles Street near Swedish American is finally drivable. Seventh Street is pulling out of its 40-year funk. Smississippi Park and the walk by the river are beautiful. It's great to see a brewery downtown (but it should be called Petritz). I did not spend much time on the west side, but the houses on the east side have never looked neater.

I was also glad to see that other things are unchanged. Panino's still makes a great sandwich. Most of my other favorites, including Uncle Nick's and Der Rathskeller, are still around too. My folks took us to breakfast at the 3L Club Sunday. Tasty. We don't get many herring breakfasts in North Carolina.

As a ham radio operator, I was thrilled to hear the activity on the Rockford Amateur Radio Association's W9AXD 2-meter repeater. It was great to hear all the bragging and commiserating about DX contacts and HF propagation. Fine Business.

I only wish the weather had been warmer.  
Cheers, Rockford.

--Gary J. Pielak, AI4GT,  
Chapel Hill, NC

Editors note:

Thanks to Jim Miller W4JR for spotting this article and bringing it to my attention. Additional comment—Gary AI4GT is a professor of Bio-Chemistry at the University of NC at Chapel Hill and was lecturing at NIU in addition to visiting with family. The 3L Club is actually named L LL Society over on 9th street here in Rockford. Gene KA9BOD

### \*\*\* HELP \*\*\*

It is important to us to have accurate addresses for both home and e-mail. Please let us know if there is a problem.

If you would like to have something published, please call me or email me at ka9bod@arrl.net.

**Cut-off for the July 2005 issue will be Friday June 23, 2005.**

Gene KA9BOD, Editor

## ITEMS FOR SALE

To place an ad, please email the Ham Rag editor at:  
KA9BOD@ARRL.NET

No items listed for sale this month.

## SPECIAL COMMUNITY EVENTS

Additional **volunteers are needed** to help provide communications for these upcoming events. Its an opportunity to help other organizations in the Rockford community by providing communications to help with the management and control of the events. It is an opportunity to put our communication skills and equipment to good use and also helps promote amateur radio. The typical event usually takes a couple of hours of our time and gives us an opportunity to observe the event up close. Usually the only equipment needed is a 2M handheld or 2M mobile radio.

Listed below are the events and the coordinator organizing the amateur radio operators.

- 4th of July Run - N9CCE/KA9IMX
- 4th of July Parade - N9CCE
- Roscoe Rail Road run - July 23 - N9OCW
- YMCA Triathalon - August 13 - N9CCE
- Girl Scout Mint Cookie Run-Sept 17-ka9bod
- CROP Hunger Walk - Columbus Day wknd
- Head of the Rock Regatta - Columbus Day wknd

All amateur operators are welcome to help out. You do not have to be a member of RARA or ARES to participate. No special training is required. All it takes is a willingness to participate. Don't be shy, give us a hand.

Gene KA9BOD



Free Technical advice for hams.  
WB9LHU Earth Works 965-9841

## ON THE WATERFRONT is a MAJOR fundraiser for RARA.

We man a ticket booth near one of the stages so that you have good music while you work. Due to the handling of money, we have to have a **scheduled list of volunteers by the end of July** prior to a leader training session the first week of August.

Volunteers receive the following benefits:

- Free On the Waterfront button (\$8 value)
- Reduced rate at the RARA awards banquet
- Listen to good music while you work
- Opportunity to work with fellow hams & friends
- Family members 18 & older can work with you (All workers get a free button)

## ON THE WATERFRONT FUNDRAISER

**September 2, 3 & 4**

The club mans a ticket booth on all three days.

Typically in 4 hour shifts. **Mark your calendars and plan to volunteer some time.**

**\*\* WE NEED YOU \*\***

### Dates to look forward to

**Breakfast in the Park, June 11 at Alpine Park in Shelter #1**  
Field Day, June 25th & 26th at Alpine Park Areas 6 & 7  
Family Picnic, August 14th at Alpine Park shelter #2  
On the Waterfront, Sept 2, 3, & 4 Club Fundraiser

### RARA Repeaters

146.610 -	pl 114.8	W9AXD
147.000 +	pl 114.8	W9AXD
223.8800 -	pl none	W9AXD
ATV input 1250 Mhz/ 434 Mhz		W9ATN
output 421.25 Mhz		

### RARA Officers and Directors - 2005

President – Bill Peters, WB9MCZ  
Vice President – Tim Peterson, KC9DNN  
Secretary – Nicholas Lager, KB9SKW  
Treasurer – Carl Cacciatore, W9TQ  
Directors: Dan Hunt, KC9ATR  
Gene Harlan, WB9MMM  
Scott Allshouse, W9SBA  
Wendy Owano, KC9BCF  
Newsletter—Gene Stankiewicz, KA9BOD  
Web Master—Paul Franklin, K9RNR

**Rockford Amateur  
Radio Association, Inc**

P.O. Box 8465, Rockford, IL 61126

Phone: 815-398-2683

Email: ka9bod@arrl.net

Web: www.w9axd.com

**Nets**

Monday 8PM	2 Meter	146.610 - 114.8
Thursday 7 PM	ARES	147.195 + 114.8
Thursday 8 PM	SATURN	146.610 - 114.8

place address label here

**JUNE 2005**

**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