



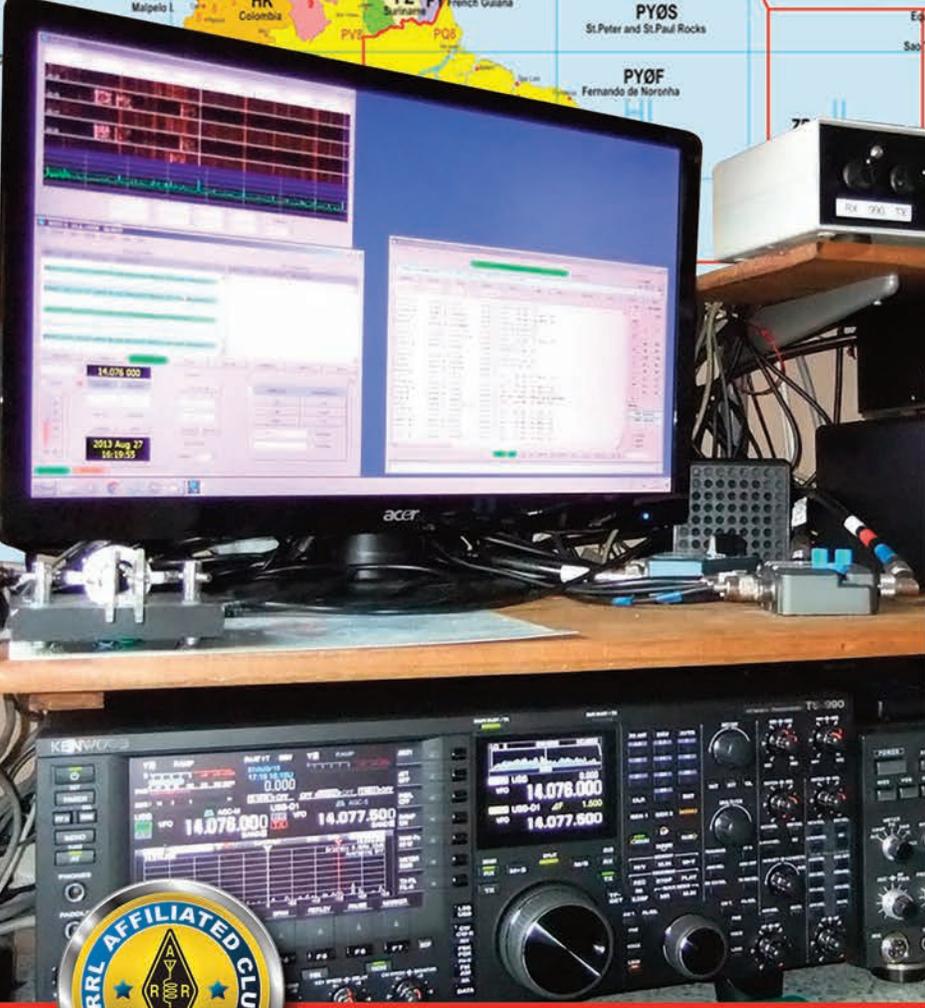
HAMRAG

Nov. 2018

Nov. 9th Contesting

Jennifer Van Zieleghe - KD9FMJ

Try #48



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**Next Meeting: Contesting • Friday November 9th • 7:00 PM
Location: St. Anthony Medical Center • Foundation Room • 5666 E. State Street Rockford, IL**

President's Message

Greetings all,

Here it is November already, and I know everyone is chomping at the bit to get all those last minute tower and antenna projects finished before the weather takes a final turn toward winter, I know I am. I would like to thank Kurt Eversole, KE9N for hosting the Illinois QSO party from his home and thank those who attended. It was a fun time had by all and I'm sure Kurt will report on how many contacts we made.

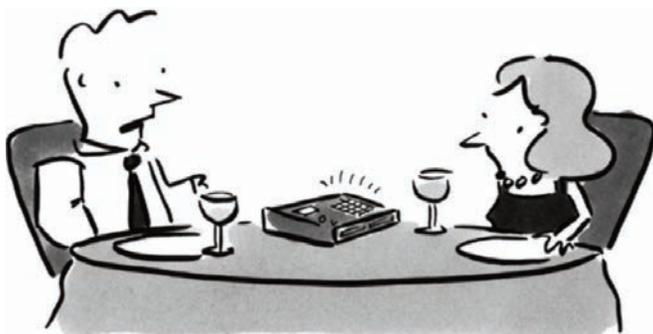
Since last month's meeting an equipment change was made at the 147.000 repeater site. It appears the digital side sounds better and the reception has improved. Hopefully before the November meeting a change needed in the repeater settings will be accomplished and the analog issues will also be corrected.

This month the elections for officers and board members for 2019 are scheduled to be held at the membership meeting. At this time some positions are still open so please think about running for a position and helping out your club. It's only as good as the members make it.

On another note, membership dues are due at the end of the year for the upcoming 2019 calendar year. Please fill out the membership form in the ham rag and turn it in to Jennifer or one of the officers. Also do not forget to fill out your nomination for Ham of the Year. This is your way to show appreciation and recognition for the person you feel has done a good job in helping the club succeed this last year.

That's enough for now so 73, and hope to see you on the 9th.

Gordon Seaman, KC9NEX
2018 RARA President



"I'm sure the babysitter is fine. Now let's enjoy dinner and turn off the police scanner."



2018 RARA Officers & Board

Officers:

President

Gordon Seaman, KC9NEX
815-262-0294,
kc9nex@gmail.com

Vice President

Randy Long, AC90F
815-978-6673
randy@rdlgraphics.com

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Open

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Editor's Note

A great Hamrag this month!

Thanks for sending in ideas, photos and articles for this issue.

Thanks
Lynn Long KD9IFP
Hamrag Editor
randy@rdlgraphics.com.



Meets every Friday morning from 8 am until about 10:00 am. An informal gathering of ham folks, no affiliations necessary, good food and good company.

Everyone is welcome to attend.

**"The Spring Garden Family Restaurant"
4820 N. 2nd Street
Loves Park, IL 61111**



RARA Repeaters

Both repeaters (146.610 and 147.000 (both have a pl 114.8)) will function with both digital and analog radio signals, but the repeaters require time to determine whether the signal is digital or analog. To operate the repeater properly you must first be sure the frequency is clear, then key and hold the microphone button down for 1-2 seconds. Then begin speaking. If you fail to do this, the first part of your message will be lost.

RARA Mission Statement

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

Election Time

It's time to vote for 2019 Officers and Directors.

Nominations for 2019 are as follows.

President

Randy Long
AC90F

Vice President

Jennifer Van Zieleghe
KD9FMJ

Secretary

Greg Kuczek
W9VOX

Treasurer

Gordon Seaman
KC9NEX

Plus Four Directors

RARA club members will vote for Officers and Directors at the November 9th meeting.



**Last
Call For**

RARA Member Survey

**Last
Call For**

Help us plan for 2019. RARA would like to know what you are working on, program topics you would like to see in the next year and or other ideas that will help us plan for 2019.

What program topics would you like in 2019?

What are you working on - or other ideas that might help us plan for 2019.

Give this to any of the RARA board members at the November meeting. Thanks for your help.

ARRL 2019 Contests & State QSO Parties

January 2019

- 1 Straight Key Night
- 5 Kids Day
- 5-6 RTTY Roundup
- 19-21 January VHF
- 26-27 Montana QSO Party

February 2019

- 2 Minnesota QSO Party
- 2-3 British Columbia QSO Party
- 2-3 Vermont QSO Party
- 11-15 School Club Roundup
- 16-17 International DX – CW
- 23-24 South Carolina QSO Party
- 24-25 North Carolina QSO Party

March 2019

- 2-3 International DX – Phone
- 9-10 Idaho QSO Party
- 9-10 Oklahoma QSO Party
- 10-11 Wisconsin QSO Party
- 16-17 Louisiana QSO Party
- 16-17 Virginia QSO Party

April 2019

- 6-7 Mississippi QSO Party
- 6-7 Missouri QSO Party
- 13-14 Georgia QSO Party
- 13-14 New Mexico QSO Party
- 13-14 North Dakota QSO Party
- 14 Rookie Roundup – Phone
- 20-21 Michigan QSO Party
- 20-21 Nebraska QSO Party
- 20-21 Ontario QSO Party
- 27-28 Florida QSO Party

May 2019

- 4-5 Arizona QSO Party
- 4-5 Connecticut QSO Party
- 4-5 Idaho QSO Party
- 4-5 Indiana QSO Party
- 4-5 Maine QSO Party
- 4-5 Massachusetts QSO Party
- 4-5 Montana QSO Party
- 4-5 Nevada QSO Party
- 4-5 New Hampshire QSO Party
- 4-5 Oregon QSO Party
- 4-5 Rhode Island QSO Party
- 4-5 Utah QSO Party
- 4-5 Vermont QSO Party
- 4-5 Washington QSO Party
- 4-5 Wyoming QSO Party
- 11-12 Arkansas QSO Party

June 2019

- 1-2 Kentucky QSO Party
- 8-10 June VHF
- 15 Kids Day
- 15-16 West Virginia QSO Party
- 22-23 Field Day

July 2019

- 13-14 IARU HF World Championship

August 2019

- 3-4 222 MHz and Up Distance Contest
- 10-11 Maryland-DC QSO Party
- 17-18 10 GHz & Up – Round 1
- 18 Rookie Roundup – RTTY
- 24-26 Hawaii QSO Party
- 24-25 Kansas QSO Party
- 24-25 Ohio QSO Party

September 2019

- 14-16 September VHF
- 21-22 10 GHz & Up – Round 2
- 29-30 EME - 2.3 GHz & Up

October 2018

- 15-19 School Club Roundup
- 27-28 EME - 50 to 1296 MHz

November 2018

- 3-5 Nov. Sweepstakes – CW
- 17-19 Nov. Sweepstakes – Phone
- 24-25 EME - 50 to 1296 MHz
- 30-12/2 160 Meter

December 2018

- 11/30-2 160 Meter
- 8-9 10 Meter
- 16 Rookie Roundup–CW

A few of the state QSO Parties have not been posted yet.
Check the RARA website for updated listings.

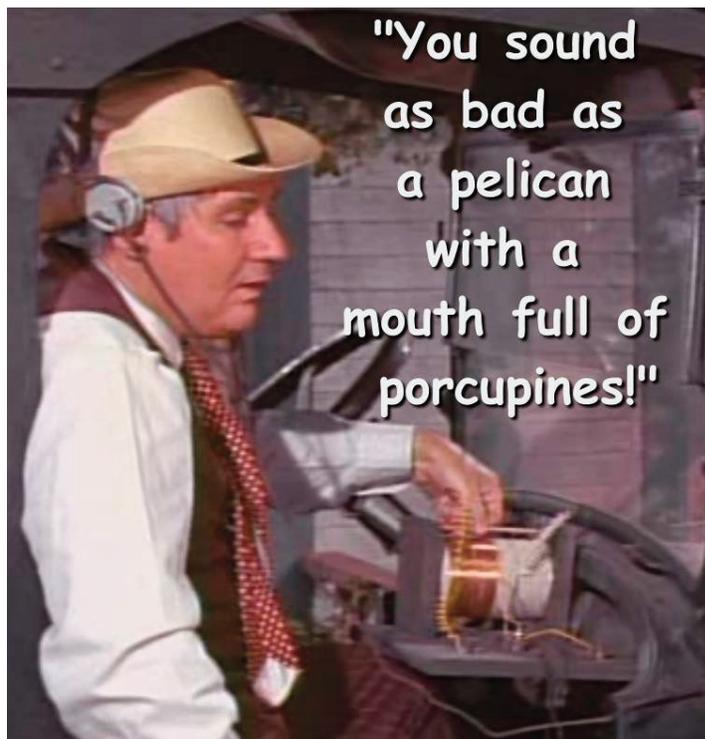
Ham Funny



And this is how I finally fixed my FT-8 problem...



I was just shoveling out a hole for my tower base and found this badger den...



Every machine is a smoke machine if you operate it wrong enough

Introduction to DMR

Photos & Information Provided By - Jim Hall - WA9EEE

The Fastest Growing form of Ham Radio bypasses the Sun Spot cycle.

Amateur radio operators often find a form of communication and turn it into a personal tool we can use to make friends around the block or around the world. The teletype was converted into CW. Early AM radio eventually became Single Sideband and now we've converted the human voice and pictures into numbers, or digits, which are transmitted everywhere.

While teletype started out on a wire that had to be strung from one site to another, eventually we added RF, radio frequency transmission, as a tool and eliminated a lot of wire and made the communication more widely available and reliable.

Computers have turned communication into a wild mix of text, pictures, sound and learning experiences. Just look at the growth of Facebook.

DMR, which means Digital Mobile Radio, is now the fastest-growing form of Ham Radio according to people that measure such things. See the November 2018 issue of QST as an example.

It all began as analog radio that was used by police, fire, ambulance and other emergency and commercial services in communities. It was relegated to the UHF frequency bands because the people they needed to reach were generally within close proximity. Then they discovered that converting that analog signal into a digital form improved the range and eliminated atmospheric noise and enabled encryption when necessary.



Motorola was the leader in the field making repeaters and HTs available. As each new generation of equipment became available, the previous versions began to find their way into the ham radio market. Because of the need for rugged and reliable equipment in the public sector, the cost of the new equipment was higher. Of course, other manufacturers got involved and eventually the Asian countries built lower cost units better suited to the growing amateur, public safety and commercial markets.

As the popularity grows, the prices go down. Today, there are over 100,000 radios registered to amateurs in the DMR database. A new good quality DMR HT can be less than \$100.

Why would you want to use DMR?

New hams often don't have a lot of money to put into the hobby and those in the hobby already have a lot invested in the conventional ham bands. (Yes dear, I bought another radio.) Once new hams pass their Technician class license test, not only are DMR HTs less costly, they can be on the air without investing in outside antennas, coax, ground rods, towers, power supplies, lightning arresters, and worrying about HOA restrictions.

DMR repeaters are available in many communities, including two here in Rockford. For example, WW9P is owned by Carl Walthall, a RARA member, and he has a good list of talk groups available. He was a great help to me when I got into DMR. His repeater's footprint, similar to 2 meters, covers most of

(continued next page)



Introduction to DMR

the city. But, you don't need to be able to "reach a repeater" to get into DMR.

Because DMR is digital, you can invest around \$100 to \$250 in an "RF Hotspot" and it will give you the whole world of contacts available even if you can't reach your local repeater. Unfortunately, here is a point where DMR gets a little confusing. All cell phone network providers allow us to use our phones as a tool to reach the internet. If you own a tablet computer that is not connected through a phone company, most phones have a "hotspot" you can turn on that will produce a local WiFi connection which you can use for your tablet.

DMR can actually use that cell phone hotspot to turn your HT into a mobile ham radio. The RF hotspot picks up the RF signal going to and from your HT and sends it to the internet through your phone's wifi connection. Don't worry about getting a high wattage HT or adding a linear amp. You can run your HT at one watt since it only has to reach your nearby RF hotspot which can be also be running on a battery pack.

There are large international DMR networks with hundreds of "Talk Groups" each dedicated to various countries or topics. You can enter the address numbers of the groups that interest you into a computer and load them into your radio. It's called a "code plug". Turn a knob on the top of your HT to select your talk group's channel and press the PTT. Just give your call sign and indicate you are listening to that talk group. It's treated as a CQ. Since your digital ID, name and call sign can be sent as well, it shows up on the screens of the DMR HTs or mobile rigs hearing

your call just like caller ID on phones. Many hams on DMR have dropped the use of the phonetic alphabet because of the digital audio and caller ID features.

The beauty of this approach is that it also makes it possible for you to have a mobile rig without drilling holes in your car, running cables, or mounting radios, microphones or antennas. Just connect to your cell phone's hotspot and drive anywhere you please with your HT, even cross country. Remember, some states require that phones and radios be "Hands free" so you may need to add a low cost bluetooth headset.

The purest in me wants to reject the whole idea of DMR because it is not the traditional RF path to making contacts. But, the huge growth in FT8 and other formats where you never even pick up a microphone or send a dot or a dash, seems to prove that not everyone rejects the digital pathway or sees the need to actually TALK to a fellow ham.

What does this have to do with sunspots?

Have you noticed how everyone has complained over the last few years about the bands not being open because of the 11 year sunspot cycle? With DMR and an RF hotspot or local repeater you won't have to wait years for the cycle to improve, you can have clear digital signals on most connections around the world or across town at any time of the day and any season.

Want to learn more?

The programming of code plugs is a bit daunting but you can get a copy of another ham's code plug for your model HT and be on the air quickly. YouTube has many videos that can answer a lot of questions for you and you can search the web beyond that.

My career was building the MasterTask Training Systems company over the last 50 years so if I can help, let me know. I enjoy teaching. I may not have all the answers, but I am willing to fake it if necessary.

73
Jim Hall - WA9EEE



No.	Contact Name	Call Type	Call ID	Call Receive Tone
88	NW Eng	Group Call	4420	No
89	SE Eng	Group Call	4491	No
90	New Zealand	Group Call	4850	No
91	Russia	Group Call	4668	No
92	Ohio	Group Call	4608	No
93	Berlin	Group Call	4016	No
94	Unlink	Group Call	4000	No
95	Talk	Group Call	9	No
96	Status	Group Call	5000	No
97	North Carolina	Group Call	4602	No
98	Minnesota	Group Call	4605	No
99	Wisconsin	Group Call	4606	No
100	Skywarn	Group Call	4502	No
101	Great Lakes	Group Call	4648	No
102	USA Mountain	Group Call	4647	No
102	USA Mountain	Group Call	4647	No



Programs 2018

November - Contesting

December - Satellite Communications

Programs 2019

January - Awards Banquet

Meetings

November 9, 2018

General RARA Meeting 7:00 pm at OSF

November 20, 2018

RARA Board Meeting 7:00 pm at OSF

December 14, 2018

General RARA Meeting 7:00 pm at OSF

December 18, 2018

RARA Board Meeting 7:00 pm at OSF



Ham Testing

The following applicants were successful:

Farris, Kevin A. - W9YAP
Upgrade to Extra

Sutera, Joseph J. - KD9LPQ
Upgrade to General

Amateur Radio exams are held the 3rd Saturday of every month in Rockford IL. The next session is 9 AM November 17, 2018.

Walk-ins welcome. Check-in is from 9AM-10AM, no exams started after 10:30.

We require two signature ID's and one photo. If you are a licensed Amateur Radio operator bring a copy of your FCC ULS page with your call sign. If you are using a CSCE for exam credit, bring the original and a copy (We need to see the originals & keep a photocopy of each). No copier on site. The test fee is \$14.00. Bring a non-programmable calculator.

Location:

OSF St Anthony Medical Center
5666 E State St (Bus US20) Rockford IL
Exams are held in the St Francis Room
(Main Entrance then turn right).

Jim Holich AB9SX
jholich@comcast.net



January

Awards Banquet



Meeting Minutes

Oct. 12, 2018

The meeting started at 7:06 pm with Gordon Seaman, KC9NEX, conducting the meeting.

Number of people attending: 21

September Meeting Minutes

The September 14, 2018 meeting minutes were read by Gordon Seaman, KC9NEX. There were no additions or corrections. A motion to approve was made by Larry Schubert, AC9G0. It was seconded by James Curtis, KC9G0L. The motion passed.

Treasurers Report

The Treasurers report was presented by Jennifer Van Zieleghe, KD9FMJ. The current balance is \$6180.74. A motion to approve was made by Randy Long, AC90F, and seconded by Larry Schubert, AC9G0. The motion passed.

Old Business

There was none.

New Business

Kurt Eversole, KE9N reported that both of the repeaters have been replaced with the new updated versions and there were still a couple issues which we need to look into.

He also talked about the Illinois QSO Party and if anyone was interested and if there was any idea where it might be held. People were told to contact him if they were interested in participating.

Program Information

Program Subject: Raspberry Pie

Presenter: Ralph Iden, WB9ICF

Comments: Ralph presented information on the Raspberry Pie computer and its different configura-

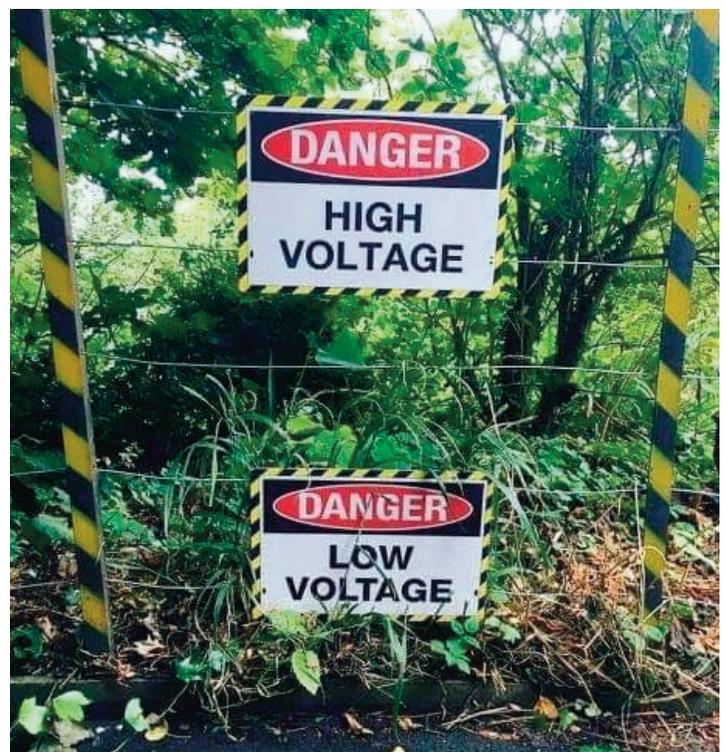
tions depending on the project you might want to control. Through a computer presentation and equipment he brought in from his own collection he was able to talk about his own projects from controlling lights, controlling and monitoring a weather station and his seismic sensor for recording earthquakes. There were many questions and discussions about the procedures and equipment involved and was very well received.

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made by Randy Long, AC90F. A second was offered by Kurt Eversole, KE9N. The motion passed.

The meeting concluded at 9:00pm.

The meeting minutes were taken by and submitted by Gordon Seaman KC9NEX



Area Nets

Monday Night 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 Jimmy, KC9GCR, (net control). 146.610 - offset (pl 114.8) RARA repeater at 8:00 pm, every Monday, except on holidays.

Tuesday Night Tech Net

at 8:00 pm, 145.110 (pl 123.0). Tony, N9ARB, is net control.

Wednesday Night Stephenson County ARES (Amateur Radio Emergency Service) Net

at 7:00 pm on 147.390 + offset (pl 114.8). N9ARB, Tony, is net control.

Thursday Night Northern Illinois ARES (Amateur Radio Emergency Service) Net

at 7:00 pm on the 147.195 + offset (pl 114.8) repeater.

Thursday Night Northern Illinois Skywarn net

at 8:00 PM on the 147.195.

Friday Night Fun Net - Every Friday night at 8:00 pm on the 146.610 - offset (pl 114.8) RARA repeater with Jimmy, KC9GCR, as net control.

HF Net Information - Head on over to the RARA website and take a look at the "Nets" page. We now have listings and links to great HF nets.

Member Profile & Ham Shack

It has been suggested that we bring back an old Hamrag feature - "Member profiles and ham shack photos".

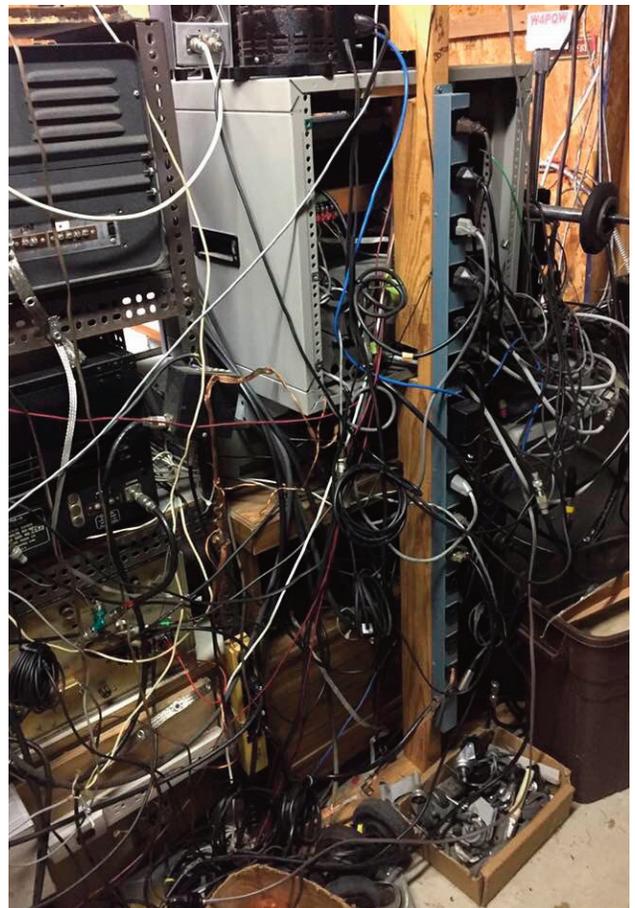
If you are interested in being featured in a future Hamrag we will need the following:

1. A good head and shoulders photo (of yourself).
2. A few photos of your shack and antenna system.
3. A nice profile story about yourself, how and why you are in the hobby, what modes you like working and what projects you're working on (see page 4 for a great example).

**Last
Call**

Send your photos and profile to:
Lynn Long KD9IFP
randy@rdlgraphics.com.

**Last
Call**



RARA Membership Form

If you would like to join the Rockford Amateur Radio Association, please fill out the form below and mail it (with the membership fee payment) to the address shown at the bottom of the form. If you would like to join at our next meeting (see cover for meeting details), fill out the form and bring the form with your payment to the meeting and see our treasurer, Jennifer Van Zieleghe, KD9FMJ.

Thank you for your support!



MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

website: w9axd.org

Membership Type: New Renewal

Annual Fees: \$20 - Student (up to age 24)

\$35 - Adult \$25 - Senior (age 62+)

Above rate includes the
RARA monthly newsletter, Ham Rag, via email
Ham Rag via USPS: \$12 extra

Name: _____

Call Sign: _____

Email Address: _____

Address: _____

Town: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Home Phone #: _____ Work #: _____

Cell #: _____ Ext: _____

Radio Interests: _____

May we make your phone and e-mail available for other RARA members only? Yes No

Comments: _____

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

All membership applications to become either a new member or to be reinstated as a member of RARA must be approved by the RARA board.

Approved: _____ Membership Year ____/____/____ to ____/____/____