

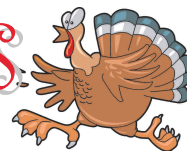
**IBM Teams with  
BPL Provider... page 4**

**Another Laptop  
Battery Recall... page 2**

**Area Ham Holiday  
Get-Togethers... page 4**



Happy  
Holidays  
from GARA



**The Greensboro Amateur Radio Association**

# Feed Line

*Providing Amateur Radio news for the Triad*



**Volume 17, No. 11**

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## GARA Wrap-up of 2008 - It Was A Good Year

by Chris Thompson, K4HC  
GARA President

The year is wrapping up (and not just with Christmas presents!). Where did the time go?

Since this is the last newsletter of the year (December being an off month for the club meeting and the newsletter), I thought I'd wrap up the year with some thoughts and observations about how the year has gone.

GARA sponsored two licensing classes (Technician and General), both of which were highly successful, and brought several new members to the club and put new hams on the air. The Open House headed up by AJ4BT was another great event that brought in more new members, re-activated old hams, and was visited by several members of surrounding clubs. The Technical Forum and News and Information net on Sunday evenings bring check-ins from well outside our area. The new D-STAR repeater on 70 cm has greatly increased activity on this previously mostly unused resource. The relationship with Greensboro Youth Soccer Association and their new director was emphasized, especially during the successful Labor Day Shootout, where the communications team did their usual stellar job.

All in all, I think we can look back on this year with pride on our accomplishments and outreach. It would not have been possible without the assistance, input and excitement of a great number of club members, who I won't

bother to try and name individually. Just look at the club roster, and they're all shown there. Almost everyone has contributed more than just their annual dues to help make GARA the outstanding club that it is.

So where does this leave us? The excitement continues with people trying new bands, new modes, new projects, and best of all, sharing this with their friends. More wire than I care to total up has been strung between trees to help get people on HF. I think everyone has heard me say that it's more fun when there's more people in the sandbox to play.

The Board of Directors at their final monthly meeting reviewed the successes of the past year, and have begun planning for continuing this trend in the upcoming year. Another Open House, another Technician class, possible construction projects, and additional activities (both social and hobby related) are being discussed as ways to keep the growth trend moving up. Were at the greatest number of club members (almost 100) that we've had in a bunch of years. This

tells me that we're doing at least some of the right things the right way.

With all these positives, I was unable to convince anyone to serve as the nominating committee for the elections upcoming at the November Annual Meeting. There are two planned vacancies on the board as I write this, for Vice President and the Engineering Chairman. I'll be approaching people myself, rather than through a nominating committee, for consideration on serving in a leadership position with the club. We really do work as a team please think about serving if asked.

You can also call or E-mail me (or any board member) to indicate your willingness to help by serving. If you're at all interested in helping shape the future of the club, plan on being at the November meeting for elections. Nominations will also be solicited from the floor for all positions.

During the upcoming holiday season, keep yourselves safe and happy. I hope you find that rig or accessory you've been wanting under the tree.

### **NEXT MEETING November 24 Annual Meeting - Elections**



The next meeting of the Greensboro Amateur Radio Assoc. will be November 24, at the Golden Corral Steak House, 4404 Landview Dr, Greensboro, NC 27407, off Wendover Ave., near Sam's Club.

In keeping with past tradition, no Feed Line will be published in December. The GARA web site will continue to be maintained if there is breaking news.

## GARA Meeting Minutes



### Regular Meeting Minutes October 27, 2008

The October meeting of GARA was held at the Golden Corral restaurant beside Sam's club near Wendover Ave. and I 40.

Chris Thompson, K4HC, called the meeting to order at 7:15 PM.

The minutes were voted on and approved as published. There was no old business to discuss.

New business: Chris spoke about the D-Star conversion of the GARA 442.875 repeater.

"To this point the 440 GARA D-Star repeater has been a loaner system at no cost to the club and has been performing in an outstanding fashion,"

"I feel that it's time that we go ahead and spend some money and purchase the controller and modifications of the Master II. The cost involved with this approximately \$1500.00. I would like to make a motion that we authorize expenditure of up to but not over \$2000.00 for the conversion to D-Star."

This motion was seconded. Chris asked for any discussion on the matter.

After a lengthy discussion we took a

vote and the motion to purchase the controller and proceed with modifying one of our GE master II repeaters carried.

We had Tom Gallagher, N4IOZ, editor of the SouthEastern Repeater Association Journal as a visitor. Tom spoke about SERA and also said that GARA will make history as the first club sponsored D-star repeater in North Carolina.

Chris said that he needs a nominating committee as soon as possible. The current board members have agreed to serve again with the exception of engineering chairman Bob Morris, W0EG, who had to move away for a new job.

Alan Bradley said that he needs some help with a soccer tournament on Nov. 22 & 23.

John Strandberg, AJ4BT, gave a presentation on HF digital radio by Gary Pierce, KN4AQ

There being no further business, the meeting as adjourned.

### Board Meeting Minutes

The GARA board meeting was held at the Benjamin Branch Library on November 10.

Those present were: Chris Thompson, K4HC; John Strandberg, AJ4BT; Al Allred, K4ZKQ; Ernie Wall, NC4EW; Roy Smith, N4BYU; Dave Touvell, KN4ZO and Greg Spencer, KG4UQV.

Chris said that he has no volunteers for a nominating committee so he asked everyone if they would be willing to serve another term in their current position. Everyone present with the exception of John Strandberg said that they would. John said that he would like to step down to devote more time to other things. Chris will contact Clark Doggett to see if he will serve next year.

We also discussed the need to fill the Engineering position.

**Old business:** We discussed the status of the D-Star conversion of our 440

repeater. We also discussed trying to lower the mailing costs for the Feedline.

**New Business:** Roy reminded Chris to book the Golden Corral for next year's meetings.

We discussed the possibility of holding another open house and license training sessions next year. We also discussed our financial status with income and operating cost for the last few years. We talked about some fundraising ideas and the need to generate more activity.

The November soccer tournament will be held at Bryan Park only and we are not sure how many operators will be needed.

Chris made a motion to adjourn Roy seconded.

Respectfully submitted by,  
Greg Spencer, KG4UQV, GARA Secretary

## Yet, Another Laptop Battery Recall From Sony Underway

Sony has announced that it will recall roughly 100,000 notebook batteries worldwide. This following several reports that the batteries could overheat.

The recall covers notebooks made by Dell, Hewlett-Packard, and Toshiba, during the same timeframe as the widespread Sony laptop battery recall of 2006. However, the laptops named by the Consumer Products Safety Commission with whom Sony is cooperating do not overlap with the models previously recalled.

There is some good news this time around. The hazard cited by the agency does not include the risk of a short-circuit or fire as in the last recall. Sony's previous recall cost the company at least \$429 million, and covered over 10 million batteries.

Go to your machines manufacturers website to find out if your battery is among those being recalled. (CPSC)

### The Greensboro Amateur Radio Association

President Chris Thompson, K4HC  
Vice-President John Strandberg, AJ4BT  
Treasurer Ernie Wall, NC4EW  
Secretary Greg Spencer, KG4UQV  
Financial Al Allred, K4ZKQ  
Engineering Chairman Bob Morris W0EG  
Operations Roy Smith, N4BYU  
Member at Large Clark Doggett, KG4HOM  
Member at Large Dave Touvell, KN4ZO  
Appointed Positions:  
News letter editor and Webmaster:  
Tom Forrest, N4GVK

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## SkyWarn Appreciation Day Set for December 6

The 10th Annual SKYWARN Recognition Day (SRD) Special Event will take place Saturday, December 6, 2008 <http://hamradio.noaa.gov/> SRD is co-sponsored by the ARRL and the National Weather Service (NWS) as a way to recognize the commitment made by Amateur Radio operators in helping to



[http://www.crh.noaa.gov/hamradio/participating\\_offices.php](http://www.crh.noaa.gov/hamradio/participating_offices.php), working as a team to contact other hams across the world throughout the 24 hour event.

The idea for the first SRD took shape in the summer of 1999. Meteorologist-in-Charge of the Goodland, Kansas NWS office Scott Mentzer, N0QE, tried to find a way to recognize the valuable contributions storm spotters make to the National Weather Service.

"Since many of those storm spotters were also hams," Floyd said, "it seemed like a natural fit for the recognition to be centered on Amateur Radio."

With the approval of NWS headquarters and a commitment to participate from many local NWS offices across the

country, the first National Weather Service Special Event took place on November 27, 1999. "At the end of the event, an amazing 15,888 QSOs were logged, with contacts made to all 50 states and 63 countries," Floyd recounted. "The Des Moines forecast office took the honor of making the most contacts of any office that first year with 761 QSOs, and went on to lead the pack until 2003 by logging between 1300-1500 contacts each year!"

Floyd said that feedback from that first event was "overwhelmingly positive" from both the NWS staff and the local ham clubs: "Suddenly there was incentive for more NWS staffers to either obtain a license or upgrade so that

more people could work ham radio during severe events. In addition, many club members had never visited an NWS office before. When they came for the special event, they learned the value of their reports and how they were used in conjunction with existing technology."

And so began an annual tradition. The following year, 85 of the 122 NWS offices -- almost 70 percent -- participated in the event, making nearly 24,000 QSOs.

"Perhaps the most unusual contact occurred in 2000 with an airliner 39,000

feet above Utah," Floyd said. "The pilot ended the QSO with a request for a 'spot weather forecast' for his arrival at Salt Lake City airport."

In 2001, the name of the event was changed to SKYWARN Recognition Day, a name Floyd said better relayed what the day was all about: "Each year since the inception of SRD, the number of NWS offices and local ham clubs participating has increased, until now more than 100 offices sign up each year to take part. The most contacts made during any SRD occurred in 2006 when -- thanks to the staff and local hams in the Grand Junction, Colorado area -- 1640 QSOs were logged!"

Station call signs have also changed over the years. Floyd said that some NWS offices and clubs apply for a special event call sign, "such as W3B in Brownsville or N0Y in Aberdeen, South Dakota. Other call signs hint at office location, including WX9GRB in Green Bay and WX4NHC at the National Hurricane Center. Still others represent more of the big picture, as in KC0SKY in Pleasant Hill, Missouri."

2008 SKYWARN Recognition Day will be held on December 6 from 0000 UTC-2400 UTC. Last year, contacts were made in all 50 states and 40 countries during the 24 hour event. If you haven't joined in the fun, make 2008 your year to do so!  
*From ARRL*



## The Cost Of US Ham Exams: ARRL Vs. W5YI On Raising Testing

The cost of taking a ham radio exam through the nations largest Volunteer Examination Coordinator is going up, but the nations second biggest V-E-C says not so fast.

On November 6th, The ARRL VEC announced that as of January 1, 2009, the fee to take an ARRL Volunteer Examiner administered Amateur Radio license exam will increase by \$1, from \$14 to \$15. Meantime, the nations other big VEC says that it will not be raising its exam rate.

Larry Pollock, NB5X, is the President of the W5YI-VEC. He says that the his

organization will hold the line on the \$14 exam fee level charged applicants to take amateur examinations. That it will not will increase license examination fees for 2009.

It should be noted that each VEC across the country establishes its own fee schedule for providing examination services. As a result, there are almost as many different rates charged for examinations as there are VEC's. Depending on the VEC, the cost runs anywhere from the high of \$15 to one that charges no fee at all to administer an exam. (ARRL Release, W5YI VEC Release)

### • Local Greensboro Testing •

Testing for the Amateur Radio license is held the second Saturday of each month at the Hickory Building, which is on Centerview Point Dr., off Meadowview, off High Point Rd. at Highway 40.

Testing starts at 9:00 AM. You need to bring two forms of ID, including a Photo ID and any previous licenses and/or CSE's. Contact by e-mail to the following person: [ag4nc@bellsouth.net](mailto:ag4nc@bellsouth.net) for a reservation/seat, which is not necessary, but advised.



## HOLIDAY PARTIES PLANNED FOR AREA HAMS

### **ARES Party & Dinner**

Guilford County ARES will have an informal "get-together" for the holidays. December 6. (Saturday evening)

Numerous places were discussed, but we have decided on the Olympic Restaurant, 8900 W Market St., Colfax, NC 27235-9602. Gathering time is 7 - 7:15. Order and eat around 7:30. Directions and a MapQuest map are on the ARES web site: [www.guilfordares.org](http://www.guilfordares.org).

Please notify Roy Smith, N4BYU or Tom Forrest, N4GVK, if you will attend and how many will be in your party. E-mail: Roy - [n4byu@bellsouth.net](mailto:n4byu@bellsouth.net) or Tom - [n4gvk@bellsouth.net](mailto:n4gvk@bellsouth.net)

### **Annual Party at Bonnie Kay's**

*Jim Hightower, W4JLH e-mailed the Feed Line with this information:*

The annual "Ham Radio Christmas Party" will again be on the second Thursday of December this year. All amateur radio operators and their families are invited. Members of Gary Hastings band will provide the musical entertainment. Remember to bring canned goods to be donated to the Greensboro Urban Ministry. Mark your calendar as follows:

Ham Radio Christmas Party: Thursday, December 11th @ 7:00 p.m.  
Bonnie Kay Seafood Restaurant  
222 Spur Road, Greensboro, NC 27406

Please respond to this message with a number in your party to Jim Hightower at e-mail: [w4jlh@yahoo.com](mailto:w4jlh@yahoo.com)



## IBM Teams up with BPL Provider to Offer Services in Seven States

On Wednesday, November 12, IBM announced that it has signed a \$9.6 million deal with International Broadband Electric Communications (IBEC) to install equipment and provide BPL service to almost 350,000 homes in Alabama, Indiana, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Texas, Virginia, and Wisconsin. According to the Associated Press, IBEC Chief Executive Scott Lee said the network, which will be funded by \$70 million in low-interest federal loans from the Department of Agriculture, should be in place in about two years. IBEC currently provides broadband to only about 1400 customers, most of them beginning to receive service in the past 18 months.

"IBEC's equipment doesn't use the ham bands," said BPL expert and ARRL Laboratory Manager Ed Hare, W1RFI, "making it less likely that they will have any interference complaints from amateurs. Their equipment, however, does interfere with shortwave broadcast and other spectrum, but in the US, not many

users have complained. IBM has been in the BPL business for a few years now, so this venture is nothing new for them." IBEC staff member Brent Zitting, KB4SL, serves as a member of ARRL's EMC Committee.

IBM is the first major systems integrator to enter the market. According to an IBEC press release announcing the joint venture, IBM "will provide overall project management, oversight, and training of the line crews who will be installing the BPL equipment." IBEC "will provide the BPL technology and equipment and serve as the Internet Service Provider (ISP) to these rural residents."

A 2006 FCC study reported that fewer than 5000 homes receive their Internet connections via power lines. IBM and IBEC's joint plan, Lee said, will serve residents, of whom about 86 percent have no cable or DSL access, in the seven states.

According to reports, IBEC's strategy

is to sign up electric cooperatives that provide power to sparsely populated areas across the eastern United States. Rather than compete toe-to-toe with large, entrenched cable or DSL providers, IBEC is looking for customers that have been largely left out of the move to high-speed Internet.

"Although the BPL industry is making progress on the EMC issues," Hare explained, "this process will not be complete until it supports regulations and industry standards that reflect its successful models. At recent meetings of the IEEE P1775 BPL EMC standards committee -- although utility and radiocommunications stakeholders wanted to include an informative annex on the ways to address BPL interference, as well as a procedure to address complaints -- some in the BPL industry, including the representative from IBEC, blocked moving the EMC standard to IEEE ballot with the annex included."

*From ARRL*

## FOR SALE

### Tower For Sale

I have a 60 foot tower, antenna, and rotator for sale; Antenna-Hy-gain 3 element 20 meter beam (full size); Tower-came from Western Electric, 60 feet; Rotator-Yaesu G-1000 SDX. All cables, coax, and guy wires included. Make an offer - Contact Lee Wimbs, W1MBS at [leewimbs@bellsouth.net](mailto:leewimbs@bellsouth.net) or phone 336-288-8595

### Deluxe Vertical Antenna & Remote Control Tuning For Sale

Steppir BigIR Antenna for Sale - \$599 Steppir BigIR Vertical Antenna system, (2005 model) 6.0-54.0 MHz Coverage Essentially, this is an adjustable vertical antenna system. The antenna made of copper-beryllium is housed in fiberglass tubing. The antenna is connected to a microprocessor-based controller (via 22 gauge conductor cable) that offers numerous functions including dedicated buttons for each ham band, continuous frequency selection from 40m to 6m all without having to leave your shack. And without traps, coils or linear loading of any kind. So, the antenna is always at the ideal length. Weight: 15lb, Element length: 32ft. ,Power rating: 2000 W PEP Radials are highly recommended!

This antenna comes with the remote controller. The unit can be upgraded to accommodate 80m. I'll also throw in DX Engineering,s stainless steel Radial Plate DXE-RADP-1P (a \$54.00 value) More information: [www.steppir.com](http://www.steppir.com) Contact: Gerald Donnelly, N4PAX 336-708-1647 or email at [n4pax@arrl.net](mailto:n4pax@arrl.net)

### 10 Meter 4-element Yagi for sale

It is a Cushcraft 10-4CD, and it is disassembled and ready to go. There is an assembly manual accompanying the antenna. I used this antenna for several years, but it has been down and disassembled for probably 5 years now. The antenna is in good shape, with all parts (except for a couple of black plastic caps, used on the element tips to keep water out of the elements). I am asking \$25. If interested, please contact Pete, W8LOG, at [pkauber@triad.rr.com](mailto:pkauber@triad.rr.com) or at 336-852-8791.



## CQ Communications Acquires WorldRadio Magazine



(Hicksville, NY and Sacramento, CA, November 12, 2008) -- CQ Communications, Inc. has acquired WorldRadio magazine, CQ Publisher Dick Ross, K2MGA and WorldRadio Publisher Armond Noble, N6WR, announced jointly today. CQ, based in Hicksville, New York, currently publishes CQ Amateur Radio, CQ VHF and Popular Communications magazines.

WorldRadio, based in Sacramento, California, has been published monthly since July, 1971, with a primary focus on the human side of ham radio. CQ, a general-interest ham radio magazine best known for its support of DXing and contesting, has been in print since January, 1945.

Armond Noble, N6WR, Publisher of WorldRadio, said that at the age of 74 the time had come for him to retire. "I wanted to be sure that WorldRadio found a good home, and that our readers would continue to be served by an independent voice in amateur radio," Noble said.

CQ Publisher Dick Ross, K2MGA, said, "WorldRadio has filled an important niche in our hobby for nearly four decades. We welcome WorldRadio's readers to the CQ family, and we look forward to meeting their needs for many years to come."

Current plans call for WorldRadio to continue to be published online as part of the CQ family of magazines, with Editor Nancy Kott, WZ8C, continuing in that position. WorldRadio subscribers will also have their subscriptions transferred to CQ magazine. Readers will be notified of details as plans are finalized.

## Hollingsworth, K4ZDH Appointed To ARRL Post

On October 25, ARRL Atlantic Division Director Bill Edgar, N3LLR, announced that he had appointed Riley Hollingsworth, K4ZDH, former Special Counsel for the Spectrum Enforcement Division of the FCC's Enforcement Bureau, an assistant Director for the Atlantic Division; Hollingsworth retired from the FCC earlier this year.

Assistant Directors are personal appointees of Directors who are chosen to aid in the normal routine of administering the Division; they usually have knowledge or expertise in a certain area concerning Amateur Radio. There are currently nine Assistant Directors in the Atlantic Division. (from ARRL)

## Technical Forum Sundays at 7:30

Each Sunday evening at 7:30, Chris Thompson, K4HC, and Rick Mainhart, WB3EXR, host a Technical Forum on the GARA 145.15 repeater.

Chris says this is a great way for Hams to ask technical questions, in which Chris and Rick will try to answer. This is also a great way for the "new ham" to "break-the-ice" and get involved in a discussion on the air.

The GARA web site, [www.w4gso.org](http://www.w4gso.org), has a new special section now for the Technical Forum. There you will find links of interest and a way to contact Chris and Rick with your suggested topics for the net. Check the link buttons on the left side of the home page.

If you don't have a question, you're more than welcome to just listen.

Check-in and get involved. Even the old-timers have questions occasionally.

## Get Well ...

Tom Hatley, KF4JZD, is still suffering from several complications due to diabetes.

## Upcoming Events

• Jan. 10, 2009, Winston-Salem FirstFest, Forsyth Amateur Radio Club, 2100 Reynolda Rd., Summit School, Talk-in 146.64

## Area Activities

**FOURTH MONDAY** – at 6:30 PM, the Greensboro Amateur Radio Association have their regular monthly meeting at the Golden Corral, 4404 Landview Dr, Greensboro, NC 27407, off Wendover Ave, near Sam's Club. Please plan to gather at 6:30 PM for dinner. The meeting is scheduled to start at 7:15 PM

### CLUB NETS:

**SUNDAYS:** weekly: The Technical forum at 7:30 on the GARA 145.15 repeater. Got a question? Check in and get an answer.

**SUNDAYS** – weekly at 9 PM, the **GARA News and Information Net**. This net features NewsLine and is on the 145.150, W4GSO repeater. Roy Smith, N4BYU is always looking for net controls. Contact him if you would like to help.

**TUESDAYS** – at 8:30 PM **The Triad SkyWarn Net** meets on the 147.225, K4ITL repeater, no tone required.

**WEDNESDAYS** – **The Guilford Amateur Society** holds their weekly net on the 145.250, W4GG repeater with an 88.5 Hz. tone. Jim Hightower, W4JLH is the net control.

**THURSDAYS** – **The Guilford County ARES Net** meets on the 145.150 repeater (100 Hz. tone) at 9 PM.

### OTHER ACTIVITIES :

**FIRST MONDAY** – **The Guilford County A.R.E.S.** monthly meeting is held at 1002 Meadowood St. off W. Wendover Ave, in the EMS building, beginning at 7 PM.

**THIRD MONDAY** – at 6:30 PM **The Guilford Amateur Society** holds their monthly meeting at the Golden Corral, 4404 Landview Dr, Greensboro, NC 27407, off Wendover Ave. Refreshments at 6:30 PM and the business meeting begins at 7 PM.

**THURSDAY** – at 11:15 AM, Greensboro Hams get together for lunch. Thursday lunch group is meeting at the K&W Cafeteria, 300 Forum VI Mall at Friendly Shopping Center. Talk-in is on the 145.150, W4GSO repeater with a 100 Hz. tone.

**EVERY FRIDAY** – at 8 PM (approximately) Greensboro Hams get together for coffee at Starbucks Guilford College EST (winter) and at Starbucks on Battleground EDT (summer).

Greensboro Amateur Radio Association

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Web:  
[www.w4gso.org](http://www.w4gso.org)

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