

THE TARA NEWS

Affiliate of the American Radio Relay League

Volume 18 © Issue 11 November 2007

Riley Hollingsworth, K4ZDH

New EmComm Manager Dennis Dura, K2DCD

To Stay Put at FCC

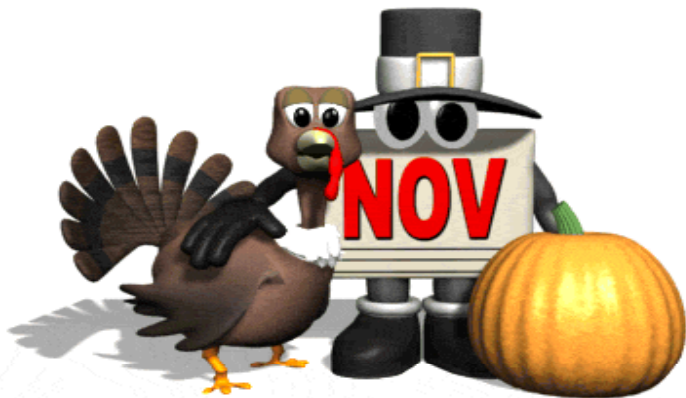
ARRL HQ Newington CT

October 30, 2007

Riley Hollingsworth, K4ZDH, Special Counsel for the FCC's Enforcement Bureau, has decided not to retire. He had announced last week that he would leave the FCC in January 2008.

Riley states, "After spending the entire weekend thinking about the decision [to retire], it became more and more clear to me that it just isn't the right decision for me right now. There are several issues on the table that I want to continue to work through with the amateur community."

The Enforcement Bureau is the primary organizational unit within the Federal Communications Commission that is responsible for enforcement of provisions of the Communications Act, the Commission's rules, Commission orders and terms and conditions of station authorizations, as well as enforcement of Amateur Radio rules (Part 97).



Speaks at Great Lakes Convention

On September 22, the ARRL's new Emergency Preparedness and Response Manager Dennis Dura, K2DCD, spoke at the Great Lakes Division Convention in Cleveland, Ohio. The following summary of Dura's remarks is based on the notes of attendee Walt Heeney, N8LJM. Dura announced that the Statement of Understanding with the American Red Cross is currently in negotiation, with staff members from ARRL and ARC having already met once for discussion.

A major issue is the Red Cross background check requirement. The ARC has said it values ARES contributions, and ARRL certainly wants to continue to support the ARC. The Red Cross has suggested that ARRL conduct its own criminal background checks, but that is not a mission the League will take on. Additionally, becoming an ARES member does not require League membership which would complicate this further. ARRL recognizes background checks are necessities, but feels that only a criminal check is warranted. A new ARRL EmComm course on-line will focus on digital modes, starting about the first of the year. Turning to the issue of resource typing, Dura said that using the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) NIMS, the ARRL will be defining types of radio assets needed for emcomm activity. Also to assist the field, "best practices" utilized by various ARES groups will be highlighted and applied across the Nation as appropriate. There is no reason he said, to reinvent the wheel. Dura explained the difference between "IDs" and "Credentials": IDs show who you are, while credentials provide your capabilities, training, education and authorizations. **(Continued on Page 5- bottom)**



More than a Club



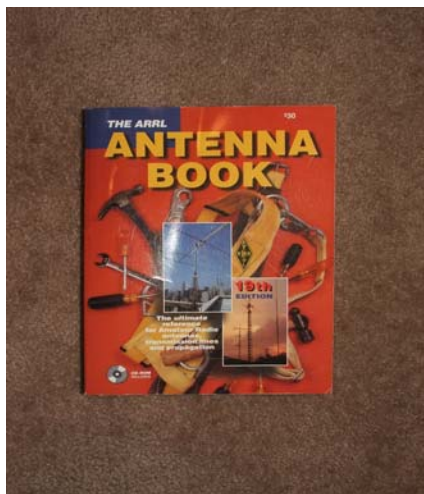
We're a Family



WHAT?? Another Ground Plane Antenna?

By: Steve Van Sickle **WB2HPR**

No! Not just ONE ground plane antenna, but rather a *family* of ground plane antennas made from readily available parts, some of which you may have in your surplus parts arsenal already. And if you don't, you can use your imagination to substitute other parts. This is not a project article, but rather, a collection of ideas to help you build a rugged, general purpose VHF or UHF antenna that you can either install permanently at your location, or dismantle and keep with your "GO" kit. Again, this is but ONE way to build this antenna.



To start, it's always a good idea to consider existing designs when approaching this type of antenna. I highly recommend the ARRL Antenna Book. You do not need any special software or a computer, just this versatile book which should be in *your* HAM library. Check out ground plane antenna theory and construction, and the separate section on VHF/UHF antennas. This can be found in Sect. 18, Page 18-17 of the ARRL Antenna Book, 19th Edition.

Take a look at the photos to see the component parts used by this author. These pictures show the 220 MHz version, but is built just like the 144 and 440 MHz versions – the only difference is the length of the respective elements. The base is a short section of 1 inch electrical conduit. The "hub" which supports the ground radials and the driven element, is simply a pipe cap, which is a normal plumbing

part available from your favorite piping supply or hardware store. The actual ground plane and vertical elements are made using surplus AM/FM car antenna whips, which became available when a local manufacturer closed their business. They are stainless steel (Think: "no rust") and are quite rugged and are known to survive at over 70 mph! The balance of the parts consists of a UHF bulkhead connector and the threaded lock ring of a PL-259, plus a couple of grommets, all available from local electronics parts outlets.

So – what if you don't have any extra car antennas? Well, here is where good old HAM ingenuity comes into play. You could substitute brass brazing rods, or other similar metal rod material. Again, visit the local scrap metal dealer or your favorite home center. Be creative!

Assembly is very straightforward, and can be done with simple hand tools, plus an electric drill. The pipe cap (brass) is drilled in 5 locations, 4 of which are later tapped to allow the threads of the ground radials to be screwed into the cap. The 5th hole is for the bulkhead fitting. The hole sizes will vary, depending of the materials you plan to use. The ground radials and the vertical radiator are cut to length, using the info in the ARRL Antenna Book tables.

The neoprene grommets are used as weather seals as well as to insulate the center radiator from the hub and base assembly. I have tested this design on the 144, 220, and 440 MHz bands. On the air testing has yielded expected results, and a Bird thru-wattmeter shows low reflected power (practically nil).



WHAT?? Another Ground Plane Antenna? (cont'd)



Combined with a short mast, you now have a rugged and simple, reliable antenna to serve your home VHF or UHF needs and will make a big difference when you cable it up to either a base or portable (HT).

In a pinch, this antenna can be quickly deployed in an emergency, either taped/clamped to broomstick or tree limb for a temporary mast. Or, you could always haul it up in a tree using a length of rope. (CAUTION: ALWAYS watch for overhead wires when erecting ANY antenna – remember: **Safety FIRST!**)

Bottom line: Use ingenuity and creativity, re-use or recycle parts and materials you may have on hand to craft this very simple and effective antenna for permanent or temporary installation to extend or enhance your VHF or UHF signal. It really does work!

73,

Steve - WB2HPR

Changing batteries, and other stuff....

At a recent TARA meeting, a Red Cross representative presented a program with tips on how we can all be prepared to take care of ourselves and loved ones in the event of emergencies or other unplanned events. All of us can benefit by taking time to review our plans and make preparations so that we can not only provide for our own well-being, but will be able to provide communications support to our communities, without becoming part of “the problem”. This is an on-going process, and we will have to “tweak” our emergency plans throughout the year as our individual needs change.

As a part of checking and testing our communication systems, we need to review basics like rechargeable batteries. Are those old nicads in your HT on their last legs? Maybe you can get a replacement pack using lithium ion technology, or perhaps you can rebuild that battery pack. Do you have a supply of fresh batteries in your flashlight? Take them out and inspect for leaking cells, clean the contacts and replace them. If you have an auxiliary battery (gel cell or storage type) – have you tested it under actual load conditions? And finally – if you have a standby generator, have you tested it lately? Do you have a supply of gas (with stabilizer)? Is there adequate oil in the crankcase? When you test your generator, put it under actual load conditions to be sure that it will really deliver top performance when you need it. I found both tires on my generator almost flat when I pulled it out of storage for it’s most recent test. Not a big deal, you say – but sure doesn’t help when you need that equipment during a power outage.

Most of us have a reliable power source and it is easy to take these things for granted and overlook the need to test our backup systems and plans. At minimum, try to check in to the local ARES or other emergency nets, and practice you over the air skills as well as your radio. If we do these things on a regular basis, they will become a habit, and can remind each other, just like we do when we reset our clocks, and change our smoke alarm batteries.

Steve - WB2HPR



New ARISS Antennas Installed on Columbus

Two Amateur Radio antennas have been installed on the International Space Station ([ARISS](#)) on the nadir side of the new International Space Station's [Columbus](#) module, set to launch later this year. On October 12, the antennas successfully passed electrical and SWR tests, with one of the two antennas, Antenna 42, going through a final test -- a thermal test under vacuum. Based on modeling, engineers have no fear the antenna will pass with flying colors. Columbus will house an additional Amateur Radio station, including the first digital Amateur Radio TV (DATV) station in space, as well as a ham radio transponder. The yet-to-be-built *Columbus* amateur gear will facilitate operation on new frequencies that will make it possible for ARISS to establish wideband and video operations for the first time and allow continuous transponder operation. Video from the installation and inspection is available at the [Columbus Web site](#).

At the ARISS International conference last year in San Francisco, Graham Shirville, G3VZV, speaking on behalf of ARISS-Europe, outlined plans for a mode L/S ham radio transponder as well as a DATV downlink on S1 band (2.4 GHz). "So, future ARISS contacts could have pictures as well as sound," Shirville told the delegates. ARISS-Europe is looking at a 10 W transmitter and a signal bandwidth of from 4 to 8 MHz. Since the *Columbus* module will be some distance from the other two ARISS stations, parallel operation will be possible.

Funding to finish and install ham radio antennas on the European Space Agency ([ESA](#))-built laboratory module has been uncertain, however. ARISS Vice Chairman Gaston Bertels, ON4WF, says donations from various sources covered a payment of 9000 Euros (approximately \$12,000) in March. A second payment is due this fall. Donations already have come in from the ARRL Foundation, AMSAT-NA and AMSAT-UK, among other organizations, as well as from many individual donors. According to Bertels, there is still a funding shortfall of 15,000 Euros (approximately \$21,000 USD). To help out, [PayPal](#) donations are being accepted.



Caption 1

A cutaway view of the *Columbus* module, built by the European Space Agency and now awaiting launch at Kennedy Space Center. [ESA Graphic]



Caption 2

Inside the Space Station Processing Facility at NASA's Kennedy Space Center, an overhead crane carries the *Columbus* module toward a work stand. [NASA Photo by Jim Grossmann]

<http://www.arrl.org/news/stories/2007/10/23/102/?nc=1>



Happy Thanksgiving!

Return to Fall NEAR fest A Series of Articles

By *John "Steve" VanSickle* WB2HPR

NEAR Fest 2007 Fall Edition

The 2nd run of the NEAR Fest was held during the weekend of October 12-13th. Like the spring gathering, it was held at the Fairgrounds at Deerfield, New Hampshire. If the spring NEAR Fest was any indication of success this, disappointment. It was bigger and tables, more commercial exhibits attendees.



The weather was typical for year – cool, and of course, a collective spirits were not with true HAM radio enthusiasm slogged our way through a wet opening day to a very pleasant and sunny Saturday. It was so nice, off came the hoodie by noon.

the northeast at this time of little precipitation! Our “dampened” however, and and determination, we



The commercial exhibits were so numerous, that the organizers had to have additional indoor areas opened up, allowing everyone to see the “latest and greatest” that the many manufacturers have to offer – many with discounted “ham fest” prices. It gave us all the chance to pick up those gotta-have-it radio goodies.

At the closing ceremony, numerous door prizes were awarded, and the grand prize was an ICOM 718 HF rig. The NEAR Fest organizers did a superb job in coordinating this gathering and my hat is off to them. The committee operates this as a not-for-profit event, and the money remaining after expenses will be used to fund a HAM radio station at the nearby Christa McAuliffe Planetarium and Alan Shepard Discovery Center at Concord, New Hampshire. Go to <http://www.starhop.com/> This worthy project will aid in introducing more people to HAM radio.



Already, plans are being laid for the spring NEAR Fest, in May 2008. You can get additional information about this when it becomes available in May at: <http://www.near-fest.com/>. If you go, you will find many hotels and motels in the area; in addition, there is plenty of available space at the fair ground for tents, campers, and motor homes. Also, A/C power is available – and of course, the “necessary” facilities. Handicap access is excellent, and you can park “inside” for an additional fee. I am looking forward to the next NEAR Fest – and I hope to see you there!

Return to Fall NEAR fest *More Photo's*



Old Friends Spending Time together

NEAR FEST 2007



The Fine Art of Tailgate Dickering



Cross the Moat, you own them



Commercial Exhibits & Dealers

Emcomm Manager Speaks **Continued from Page 1**

Emergency response agencies are looking for both. Ultimately, IDs will include credentials, which will determine who can serve where in and around the disaster area. Integration of various emcomm entities is a goal. Mutual aid will improve with closer ties among ARES, RACES, SKYWARN, and with counties, states and other levels of emergency management, Dura said. DHS has formed a new unit devoted to emcomm functions. This unit should be stood up with staffing before the end of the year according to sources. Watch for more spontaneous ARES drills. Dura activated one over the Labor Day weekend to test responses. There will be more top down spontaneous drills to test readiness and participation. The staff at ARRL is considering moving the dates of the venerable Simulated Emergency Test (SET) with the likelihood of having regional, and potentially national SETS. These regional SETS will be based upon the hazards and risks inherent to the locale. For his presentation, Dura was wearing a Blackberry (telephone, e-mail, SMS, IM) and a Skytel 2 way pager, and a H-T. He said that ARES members should not rely on ham radio alone to maintain a heightened level of situational awareness. Emergency communicators must be able to use multiple tools so they can use what works best at a particular scene. Dura's final comment was that the days are almost over when ARES will accept volunteers who say "call me if you need me," but fail to be trained, attend meetings and participate in drills.

[Thanks to Walt Heeney, N8LJM, for this report]

The Positive Image of Amateur Radio in the Media in the 21st Century

Allen G Pitts, W1AGP
ARRL Media & PR Manager

During the month of September 2007, there were many positive articles in the media about Amateur Radio. But, there were also a few which did major damage to the public perception of our Service. Unfortunately they were in large metropolitan newspapers and, by the time an ARRL PIO learned about them, it was too late to change things. These articles were proclaiming the "death of Amateur Radio", that it was antique and an anachronism to the 21st century, full of ancient grumpy men and that the hams themselves were not friendly nor welcoming. The real tragedy of this is that the reporters were quoting their community's own local hams!

None of the articles had numbers or empirical data to show the true trends underlying the present state of amateur radio. None looked beyond the personal opinions voiced by their local club or they might see the recent gains following February 2007. None of them saw the larger picture around the country or the work being done in schools, scouting, ARISS, digital work, ARES and other EmComm actions. But they had their quotes, and that was enough to hurt us.

While not all areas of the country are motivated by the same approaches, there really is a lot of new growth in important areas. In some places, emergency operations and EmComm is indeed a BIG deal. We are gaining many new hams entering the field because they want to be part of a response operation. That is part of this year's PR push on EmComm. In other areas, it may not be EmComm that is the big draw. It could be the hobby side of the Service. For them, the "Hello!" materials are still available and timely. If that fits your area, then use them there. In some other places or situations, it will be the technical side of Amateur Radio that is of interest. The ARRL is working on a coordinated program for that to come out in 2008. It will be the hardest of the three to create, but plans are already well along.

These three, Hobby, EmComm and Technical activities are the motivational keystones of the Service. No one thing is going to attract "the general population." We encourage you to look at your own local situation. Which type of motivator works best in your area? Use that one. In the meantime, our importance in EmComm is a motivator in antenna issues, spectrum defense and other political situations.

Are we "dying" out? Not really. Amateur Radio never was, nor will be, a "mainstream" activity. But recent numbers are up and, just as important, the percentage of hams who actually get on the air or go on to higher class licenses is up. With the 10 year license-lag, most who are dropping out seem never to have been active to begin with. We also see trends which follow the solar cycles -- currently at a low.

To quote Pogo, "We have met the enemy and he is us." Over the past two months the national PR Committee has seen far too many articles quoting their local hams saying we are all dying out! With attitudes like that, is it any wonder the reporters print it? It's a self-fulfilling prophecy.

This is why we need informed, active P.I.O.'s and hams need to defer media responses to them. Anytime, you or a ham in your area is contacted by the media, steer them to your local P.I.O. If you don't have one nearby, steer them to your section's PIO. These professionals are trained in showing the best that amateur radio has to offer to the public and to prospective licensees. Fifteen minutes of individual fame is not worth the damage your personal opinions could cause to us all.

Editor's Note: If you remember the great article that Bill Nettleton did that was in the September Issue of the TARA NEWS the Story was mostly positive in nature, but there was one Ham that made a comment that, "It's a declining hobby. With cell phones and computers, it just doesn't have the same aura as it had for us as kids." This comment might very be the one comment to be remembered by the reader. Instead of those comments, the amateur operator might have been better off telling the reporter about all of the new digital modes and the ways computers are being interfaced into the hobby, today.

When dealing with Media please keep your comments positive and if you have have no knowledge on the subject or are dealing with the media at a club function or in an EMCOMM -RACES/ARES situation refer them to the P.I.O., in charge.

WRC-07 Wraps Up in Geneva; Will Likely Meet Again in 2011

The final working session of the 2007 World Radiocommunication Conference ([WRC-07](#)) in Geneva drew to a close Thursday afternoon, November 15. The signing ceremony for the Final Acts will take place Friday. According to International Amateur Radio Union ([IARU](#)) Secretary David Sumner, K1ZZ, the principal achievements and disappointments, as they relate to the Amateur Services, of the conference are:

Achievements

- Maintenance all existing amateur allocations, including the 7.200-7.300 MHz allocation in ITU Region 2 (the Americas) that had been somewhat at risk in connection with consideration of additional allocations for HF broadcasting (see below).
- A new worldwide secondary allocation at 135.7-137.8 kHz with a maximum radiated power limit of 1 W [e.i.r.p.](#) (given the low efficiency of practical antennas for this frequency range, this limit is not as severe as it may sound).
- Inclusion of an item, "to consider an allocation of about 15 kHz in parts of the band 415-526.5 kHz to the Amateur Service on a secondary basis, taking into account the need to protect existing services" on the provisional agenda for WRC-11 (set for 2011).
- Avoidance of future agenda items that pose serious threats to key amateur allocations.
- Some improvement in the so-called "country footnotes" that provide for different allocations by country in all or part of the 1.8, 3.5, 50 and 430 MHz amateur bands.

Disappointments

- No new allocation for the Amateur Service in the vicinity of 5 MHz, and no agenda item to consider such an allocation at a future conference.
- No future agenda item to consider an amateur allocation at 50 MHz in ITU Region 1 (Europe, the former Soviet Union, Mongolia, Africa and parts of the Middle East).

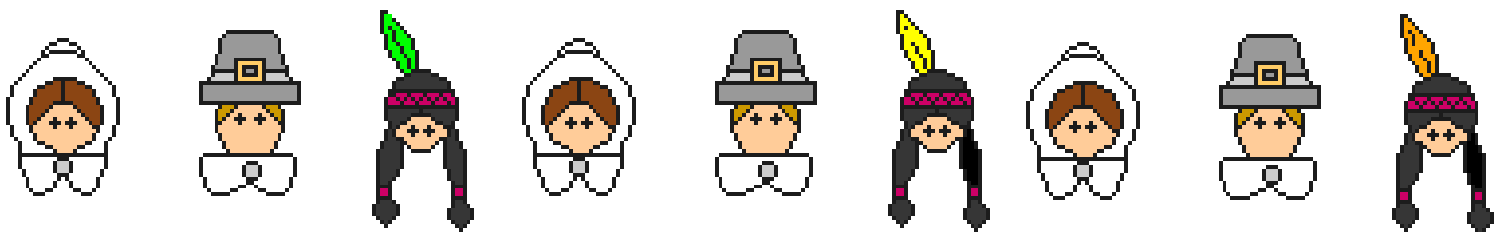
"No Change" for Amateur Allocations, HF Broadcasting

The amateur issues were of course a minor part of the WRC-07 agenda, but the Amateur Service was involved in one of the most contentious agenda items dealing with allocations between 4 and 10 MHz. A series of European Common Proposals had proposed changes to allow for an increase of 350 kHz in HF broadcasting allocations, with a footnote for administrations to allow the Amateur Service to use 5.260-5.410 MHz on a secondary basis and with a radiated power limit of 250 W; however, HF broadcasting had no support from the other regional organizations and no compromise acceptable to all parties could be found. Ultimately the European administrations had to accept "no change" for broadcasting, effectively scuttling our chances for a 5 MHz allocation.

Next WRC Tentatively Set for 2011

The IARU had hoped that if an allocation could not be achieved at WRC-07, an appropriate agenda item could be included for WRC-11. The 2007 conference, however, had little interest in taking up HF issues at the next conference, tentatively set for 2011, having little to show for a great deal of effort expended on HF in preparing for WRC-07. The only HF issues on the provisional WRC-11 agenda have to do with oceanographic radar applications and the implementation of new digital technologies for the maritime mobile service.

The International Telecommunication Union's planning for the next World Radiocommunication Conference begins on Monday in Geneva, with the convening of a two-day Conference Preparatory Meeting for WRC-11. Paul Rinaldo, W4RI, will attend on behalf of the IARU.



FALL TARA TNT TRADER NET

TARA- N2TY - W2TRY Repeater Group

NEW HAM ENJOYS NET !!

From: Jason Wheatley

To: TARA-N2TY@yahoogroups.com



Bill and the rest of the TARA gang,

Thanks for another fun Thursday night on the repeater last week. It's always fun to poke my head into the window of the Trader Net, knowing full well I'm going to get jumped for being AWOL.

I did watch the video on John's site and I was truly impressed with the quality and the acting. I think both Karen and Mr. Bill may have missed their calling on SCTV. I think there should be a sequel.

I had a flashback last night when John started talking about WPTR's tower getting hit by a plane. That incident was used in my officers' training I took years ago for the fire dept. The point the instructor was trying to make was that even as a young lieutenant, you better be ready for anything because the chief isn't always going to be around when the big one might hit. The instructor was in charge of the incident that day, he was only a new lieutenant at the time.

It's been said before, TARA has a great bunch of fun people. Thanks for the Thursday night laughs!!

Take care,
Jason Wheatly
KC2NDG

EVERY THURSDAY AT 9 PM

on 145.170 / 447.075 Repeaters

Motorola buys Yaesu

Motorola USA has announced its intention to launch a tender offer to acquire a controlling interest in Vertex Standard Co, Ltd. Vertex Standard is the parent company of Yaesu. Motorola will own 80 percent of Vertex Standard; Tokogiken, a privately held Japanese company, controlled by current president and CEO of Vertex Standard Jun Hasegawa, will retain 20 percent, forming a joint venture. The total purchase price for 80 percent of the outstanding shares on a fully diluted basis will be approximately US \$108 million.

More Complete Information on the Merger at
<http://tinyurl.com/36pfdB>

Entertainment

Books '08

\$ 30.00 each

Contact

Ken Davis

KB2KFW

272-0112



Rensselaer County ARES/RACES Nets Meet

Each Wednesday Night at 7:30 PM on 145.17 Repeater



Tune in every Thursday evening at 7:30 PM on the 145.17/447.075 repeater for the Rensselaer Co. ARES/RACE Net. Our group also meets once a month at the Rensselaer County Public Safety Building located at 4000 Main Street, South Troy, N.Y. Our next meeting date will be announced on the net. We are always looking for New Members. We are proud to say that our group has increased in size in 2007 and we hope that it we continue to flourish.

This past Thursday we ran a Simplex Net on 146.55 Mhz instead of operating on the TARA repeater. No relays were necessary and there were ten (10) check-ins. KB2SPM tested a 440 Crossband repeat for additional checkins. Everyone heard each other with no problem from as far away as Schenectady.

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Vice President: Karen Smith, KS2O.....273-6594
Secretary: Marilyn Davis, KB2JZI.....272-0112
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Steve VanSickle WB2HPR.....(07-09)..
Ken Smith WA2TQK.....(07-08)..

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Asst Manager

William "Doc" Kelley, KC2JDW.....235-5063

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TARA HF CONTESTING:

Bill Eddy, NY2U.....273-9248

HF DX & Contest Manager - NY2U

(If you take the Job, I will throw in a Free

Turkey, this month) ☺

TARA VHF/UHF CONTESTING:

Contest Manager - Ray Ginter, N2ZQF

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THE TARA NEWS

Troy Amateur Radio Association, Inc.

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Troy, New York, 12181-1292



Visit us on the Internet

At <http://www.n2ty.org/>

Regular monthly Meeting

Tuesday, November 20, 2005

7:00 p.m.

**Green Island Municipal
Center**

Intersection of

George St. & Hudson Ave.

Green Island, New York

Ample Parking

Parking Lot on Hudson Ave.

Troy's Full Service Repeaters
145.170/R 447.075/R