

President Emeritus - Bryan Jackson, W2RBJ President - Patrick Negus, W2PMN Vice-President - Walt Snyder, N2WJR
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The Long Saga of the 270 Club's Main VHF Repeater Finally Returns to the Air

After nearly a year of being off the air, EGARA's main VHF repeater returned to its familiar 147.270 MHz spot in early August, this time from atop the Helderberg Mountains. The project was completed thanks to the hard work, cooperation and dedication of several core club members -- and Albany's Channel 10, WTEN.

The long saga began a year ago when the original repeater that was owned and operated by Tom Scorsone, KC2FCP, lost its home on a tower located in Loudonville when the site was sold. That set the club off on a search for a new location. After a number of inquiries, WTEN Chief Engineer Steve Pingelski offered the use of the station's former analog transmitter site on the Helderbergs. The agreement with Nexstar Media -- the owner of the station -- was signed last November on Thanksgiving Eve. But with winter weather on the horizon, getting the project underway would be delayed. In the meantime, planning and preparations began.

As the site agreement did not include use of the old WTEN analog tower, it was decided to erect a new standalone tower for the repeater's antenna. The club was able to secure sections of Rohn 25-G tower from Dave Abdoo, the regional Chief Engineer for iHeart Radio, which operates several local stations, including WGY. In early June, a crew of EGARA members sanded and repainted the tower pieces and installed the base on a concrete footing.



Bob Isby, K2RHI, hoists a tower section in place for the club's VHF repeater antenna. The old WTEN analog tower is in the background.

A photo gallery of the project is on pages 3 & 4.

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The next step came in July when Bob Isby, K2RHI, who owns Algonquin Communications, graciously donated his time and equipment to erect the tower, antenna and coax feed line. He also donated the Rohn tower base and was able to provide a new commercial grade four-bay VHF antenna at a deep discount.

But the club also needed to acquire its own repeater and duplexer. Pete Sochocki, NY2V, was able to have a 75 watt Motorola unit donated to EGARA. A used Sinclair duplexer was also purchased. But the saga continued when Bob discovered that the machine was inoperable because of severely leaking capacitors. Once again, the project was stalled.

-continued on page 2-

The Saga of the 270 Repeater...

Fortunately, the RF God -- also known as Bob Isby -- came to the rescue. He was able to locate another Motorola repeater that included the added benefit of a more powerful 100 watt transmitter. Bob tuned the unit to the 147.250 MHz and set it up to automatically ID the station with the club's W2EGB call sign in Morse Code. In addition, the club was able to purchase a new dual band VHF/UHF Yaesu repeater for use on the 70 cm band. It would also serve as a backup for the VHF Motorola machine. It appeared the project was finally nearing completion... except it wasn't.

As Bob fired up the replacement Motorola repeater, tests showed only a few watts coming out of the duplexer, despite the 100 watt input power. Efforts to re-tune it failed to bring it anywhere near proper performance. Stalled again.

That's when Bob stepped up once more. A day later he called to say he had a spare duplexer that club could borrow until it decided on a permanent fix. On Saturday, August 2nd, he installed the loaner and W2EGB was finally back on 147.270 again!

Meanwhile, longtime club member and repair guru Steve VanSickle, WB2HPR, took the faulty Sinclair duplexer and put it on his test bench. He found the problem on the transmit side of the unit -- and as is his trademark-- he dug into it and brought it back to factory new specs. It was swapped with the loaner unit and performed as expected. That would seem the end of this long saga, but not quite.

While the old WTEN analog site is located at an elevation of 1,560 feet, there is terrain just to the east that rises to 1,620 feet. While this issue was known, it was hoped the 100 watt signal would be enough to overcome it. Unfortunately, coverage into the city of Albany and portions of Rensselaer, East Greenbush and Rensselaer County was still affected by the terrain.

In an effort to improve the repeater's coverage to these area, EGARA has formally asked WTEN/Nexstar if it can relocate the repeater's antenna on to its old TV tower. Originally, the station said that would require the club to have \$5,000,000 in liability insurance, more than double the \$2,000,000 it has available through the ARRL's club insurance program. As the tower is not in use at all, the club has asked that the company consider accepting the amount EGARA presently carries. WTEN Chief Engineer Steve Pingelski has indicated his support for the proposal and is presenting it to Nexstar for consideration. So, the saga continues...



Bob finalizes the repeater tower project by preparing to mount the 4-Bay antenna to the top of the mast. Time from start to finish was about four hours.

...and Repeat

**REPEAT**

In addition to planning improvements to the 147.270 VHF repeater site coverage, the club has other upgrades on its "to do" list as well.

These include adding Echolink to the repeater setup, as there are former club members who now live out of the area but who would like to stay in contact. John Madella, WB2HTZ, who now lives in Florida, was kind enough to donate a computer to both support Echolink as well as run the old DOS-based programs required to program the Motorola repeater. However, a repeater controller is still needed to complete that project. The club already has an Internet "hotspot" in service at repeater site for eventual EchoLink access.

Another proposal is to add a UHF repeater to the club's offerings. The new Yaesu unit it purchased offers this capability. This project will require acquiring an antenna and coax. The UHF duplexer that will be needed has already been secured through a donation from club member Steve VanSickle, WB2HPR.

Repeater Project Photo Gallery - Start to Finish



Work begins with Walt Snyder, N2WJR, and Pat Negus, W2PMN, making a survey of the proposed tower site and necessary measurements.



Club members gathered on a Saturday to sand and repaint the tower. It looked factory-new when finished.



Space for the repeater is located in the former WTEN engineering office at the station's old analog transmitter site. EGARA also installed a wi-fi "hotspot" and security cameras to monitor the site.



To prep the project, the old WTEN site was cleared of brush, trees and weeds, including the area under the coax bridge where the EGARA tower is secured.

Chris D'Allaird, AK2CD, helped tackle the undergrowth. Meanwhile, the front of the old WTEN building was finally cleared of weeds and brush thanks to the hard work of Matt Saplin, W2SAP. The grass was mowed thanks to Peggy Donnelly, KD2LMU.



In early June, the club located used Rohn 25G tower sections for the project.



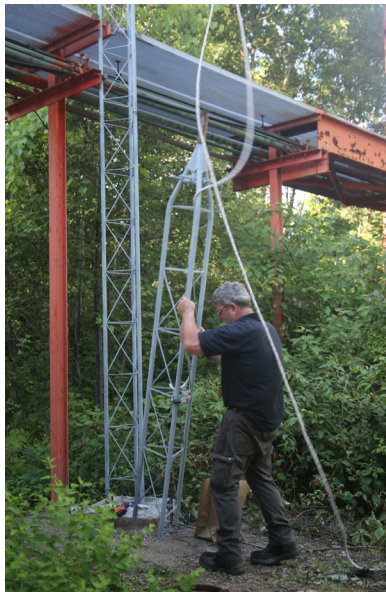
The long-awaited tower installation began with digging the footing for its base. Matt Saplin, W2SAP, and Pat Negus, W2PMN, handled the auger.



More Repeater Project Photo Gallery



With the concrete set and the tower base in place, Pat Negus unveiled the first section to go up.



Barry Leet, WA2CW, assisted by getting each tower piece ready to be lifted in place.



Tower Guru Bob Isby, K2RHI, secured the Rohn 25G tower to the old WTEN-TV coax bridge.



Bob bolted the 4-bay antenna in place and connected the coax feed line. The entire tower install was completed in just over four hours.



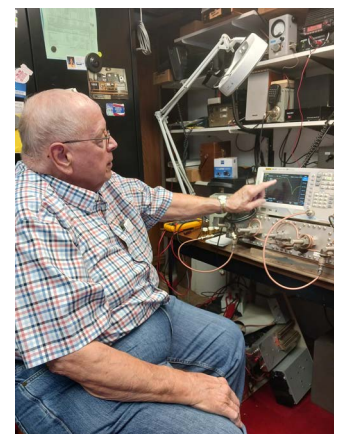
Bob skillfully raised each tower section into place using a "gin" pole.



EGARA members finished up the install by grounding the tower, securing the coax line and running it to the repeater location inside the building.



Left: Bob tweaks the Motorola MSF-5000 repeater for maximum output. Right: Steve VanSickle, W2HPR, finishes repairing the Sinclair duplexer to proper operation.



September: A Busy Month for EGARA

With Labor Day marking the unofficial end of summer, EGARA will once again return to a busy schedule of activities starting with September.

The club's 2025-2026 season will kick off with its return to regular monthly meetings on **Thursday, September 11th at 7 pm** at the Rensselaer County Search and Rescue Building. The agenda will include discussion and planning for the following two events:

On **Saturday, September 13th**, the club will participate in the Fourth Annual East Greenbush Community Day at the town park. The event will begin at 11 am and run until 3 pm, with EGARA operating an HF station in the Red barn building to demonstrate Amateur Radio in operation and to give visitors a chance to go on the air and make contacts.

The club will also provide handouts about the hobby and information on how to get licensed. Membership applications will also be made available, with an offer to join the club for free for those who are interested in getting their license and exploring the hobby.

Club members will meet at 9:30 am to set up the station and to rig an antenna. The new vertical antenna purchased by the club for Field Day activities will be utilized. An email will be sent out prior to the event so members can sign-up to participate -- or they can RSVP before that by emailing EGARAradio@gmail.com.



The following **Saturday, September 20th**, EGARA will participate in the Bicentennial Celebration of the opening of the Erie Canal by operating a "Parks On the Air" station aboard the USS Slater in Albany. The Destroyer Escort museum ship is located within the canal corridor and the plan is to operate from 10 am to 4 pm from the Slater's radio room. Members who plan to participate should also RSVP by emailing EGARAradio@gmail.com.

Organizers of the event are looking for as many clubs and individuals as possible to plan POTA activations within the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor (US-6532) during the celebration. The Heritage Corridor is a large area that also includes Cayuga and Seneca Lakes, and even extends north of Albany, so many hams and Amateur Radio clubs are expected to participate. EGARA will also make its Special Event QSL

cards available to contacts who request them.

On **Sunday, September 14**, EGARA members are also invited to help provide communications support for the Annual Walk/Run will take place at the Albany Jewish Community Center on Whitehall Road. The event requires 20 or so hams to staff the route for communications support. Reporting time is planned for 7 am and the event is usually over by 10:30 or so. Radios will be provided. Fred Thumhart, KB2ITX is coordinating the event and those interested in assisting should email him directly to sign up or ask questions at: KB2IXT@hotmail.com.

This fund raiser provides critical financial support for the Albany JCC programs such as Early Childhood, After school and Summer Youth programs and Cultural and Community programs. More information can be found at: <https://albanyjcc.org/Walk/Run>.

On the Beam

News & Notes

2026 EGARA Hamfest Set for June 6th!

EGARA's 22nd Annual Hamfest will be held June 6, 2026 at the East Greenbush Town Park. The location was used for two previous Hamfests after the East Greenbush Fire Department pavilion became unavailable due to Covid restrictions.

"We're fortunate to be able to once again hold our Hamfest at the park as the Red Barn building there offers enclosed space, bathrooms, air conditioning and a fully quipped kitchen," said EGARA Board member Bryan Jackson, W2RBJ. "As a local non-profit educational organization, the club is also able to rent the facility at a substantially reduced rate."



EGARA will return to the East Greenbush Town park for Hamfest 2026

This year's Hamfest was held at the Fire Department's pavilion, but was less than ideal because of heavy rain and a power failure in the bathrooms which resulted in no lights and toilets becoming backed up because the building's sewage pump was disabled.

The town park also offers a beautiful lakeside setting and ample parking. Although the building itself is smaller than the fire department pavilion, there is a large covered porch area and a separate pavilion with picnic tables.

September is National Preparedness Month



Amateur Radio is a valuable emergency communications resource -- and with September being National Preparedness Month -- it's a good time to look at your personal, family, and community resilience levels. In fact this year's theme is "Preparedness Starts at Home."

"Now is the time to make sure everything is in order," said ARRL Director of Emergency Management Josh Johnston, KE5MHV. For hams, it means taking the time to check their equipment -- from the ground to the antenna, so that it is ready. "Many hams already participate in daily, weekly, and monthly nets that help them hone their communication skills, but if you're not already active in one, this could be a good opportunity to get into it," said Johnston.

To extend your personal preparedness into helping provide community resilience, Johnston invites operators to become active in their local ARRL Amateur Radio Emergency Service® (ARES®) activities. "ARES has been leveraging the utility value of the Amateur Radio Service for 90 years," he said. "We saw last year during Hurricane Helene how vital of a lifeline ham radio operators were for the affected areas."

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) is also predicting an above-normal 2025 Atlantic hurricane season. Hurricane Watch Net (HWN) Manager Bobby Graves, KB5HAV, says that should motivate hams. "Never let your guard down," said Graves. "Don't live your life in fear, just be aware." Graves added that his net operators are spread across the Western Hemisphere, but they still have training sessions via radio nets and Zoom meetings.

EGARA June Meeting Minutes

- The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM. Introductions were made by all members (14) present.
- President Patrick Negus, W2PMN made his report:
- Negus noted that the 2025 Hamfest went well. Negus also noted that three new members were gained at the Hamfest. Negus stated that he wanted the club to create an “Info Board” sign similar to the ones that Search and Rescue had to showcase the club at events. Negus also noted that he was looking for someone to volunteer as a “Club Recruitment Officer” to help attract new members to the club and help new members quickly find their footing with the club.
- Negus noted that the club appeared to do better than previous years with Hamfest income and stated that the final amount had yet to be determined.
- Board Member Bryan Jackson, W2RBJ, noted that the club would need to get a location rented soon for the 2026 Hamfest. Several members suggested alternative sites given the flooding issues at the fire house Pavilion and the fact that one of the bathrooms didn’t have working lights. Alternative sites discussed included the Goff Middle School Cafeteria, the East Greenbush Town Park, and Hudson Valley Community College.
- Member Dave Smith, WA2WAP was able to get a lawnmower donated to the club to help with maintenance at the WTEN site.
- Jackson noted that Sidebands, the club newsletter would be on hiatus until September.
- Vice President Walt Snyder, N2WJR announced that the club would be going to the Channel 10 Tower on June 13th to prep the site for the antenna project to get the club’s VHF repeater back on the air. Snyder noted that the process would take multiple visits over the Summer, with the hopes that it would be back on the air before Fall.
- Treasurer Peter Brickman, KD2YLG, presented a summary of expenses and income since the last meeting and the club’s current bank account balance. He also said approximately 158 people attended the Hamfest.
- President Negus noted that several Rohn 25G tower sections had been purchased for \$175.00. Negus requested that a work party be set up to sand and paint the tower sections prior to installation. Negus added that the club also needed to finish dealing with vegetation at the WTEN site, cleaning the building, and fixing the front door.
- Board member Bryan Jackson, W2RBJ noted that the 147.270 Repeater duplexer had been tuned by member Steve VanSickle, WB2HPR. In addition, Bob Isby, K2RHI, had offered a discounted 4-bay antenna for the machine. He was also consulted about guy wire recommendations.
- Negus noted that the VE Session from May 31st yielded four new Amateur Operators, with all passing their Tech exams and one who also passed the General exam.
- Prior to adjournment, a presentation and general discussion was engaged about Field Day 2025.
- The meeting concluded at 8:14 PM.

Minutes prepared by Club Secretary David Jaegar, Jr., K2DEJ

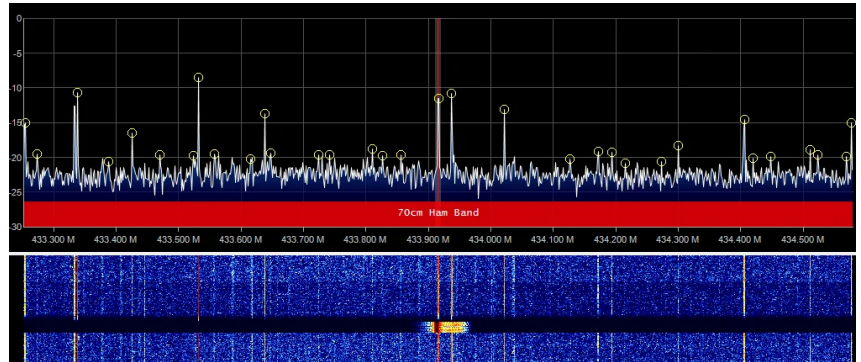
ARRL Files Comments to Protect 70-Centimeter Amateur Band

ARRL has filed comments with the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to oppose part of an application that would impact the 70-centimeter amateur band for telemetry, tracking and command of satellites.

The application, from AST & Science, LLC (AST), requests “unprecedented authorization to 430-440 MHz for a constellation totaling 248 satellites to communicate with five ground stations using up to five channels with up to 256 kHz bandwidth.”

The formal opposition, filed by ARRL's Washington Counsel, asserts that the permission AST seeks “should be denied because AST does not demonstrate need for TT&C spectrum beyond that available within existing allocations.”

The filing goes on to highlight just how unprecedented the request is and that the requested spectrum is not allocated for the requested purpose. The filing states:



“The 430 – 440 MHz band is not allocated domestically or internationally for the requested space-to-Earth and Earth-to-space satellite TT&C operations. As others already have noted in this proceeding, signals in this band from AST’s current 5-satellite constellation have been observed throughout the world, including in the United States, notwithstanding that the satellites are authorized to communicate only with five ground stations well outside the United States. From the operations by the current five satellites, it appears that the satellites at times have transmitted continuously in the 430 – 440 MHz band throughout their orbit, not just when in communication with one of the authorized ground stations. This activity defeats the purpose of preventing interference in the United States by limiting operations in this band to ground stations distant from the United States. Authorizing an additional 243 satellites to use this band, which would result in multiple satellites over the U.S. at all times, would effectively usurp this band’s allocated use.”

The 70-centimeter band is also used in emergency communications. As recently as early July, ARRL volunteers serving in the Amateur Radio Emergency Service® (ARES®) made headlines for providing critical communications in flood-ravaged areas of the Texas Hill Country. Allowing the 70-centimeter band to become overrun with TT&C operations could impact the ability for the Amateur Radio Service to be used in future disasters. “TT&C operations in the 430 – 440 MHz band are capable of causing harmful interference to radio amateur communications, including to amateur satellites operating in the 435-438 MHz sub-band,” the comments state.

The comments go on to outline why the application would be non-compliant with the ITU Radio Regulations Treaty.

ARRL said it will continue to fight to ensure amateur radio operators have reliable, interference-free access to the spectrum they depend on -- especially in times of emergency and to serve local communities.

Today's Reality Check



Saratoga County Amateur Radio Association
presents our 39th annual

HAMFEST 2025

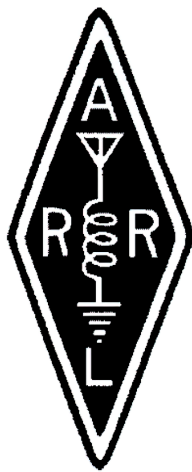
Saturday, September 6th

Gates open at 7:00 am

Saratoga County Fairgrounds, 162 Prospect St, Ballston Spa, NY 12020

Only \$10 per person includes door prize drawings, 8'x 8' "tailgate" space

***** GRAND PRIZE: YAESU FT-710 FIELD ****



Bucket Prizes

- MyAntennas - EFHW 4010-1K-ICAS
- Elite 3.5 LCDS ZUMspot (Hotspot)
- RIG EXPERT Antenna Analyzer AA-55 Zoom

*****You don't have to be present to win the grand and bucket prizes*****

- NEW AND USED gear and accessories to haggle over
- Under-cover tables available for \$10 each
- VE exam to be held at 8:30 am (on site, again this year!)
- Delicious Food served all day
- Door prize drawings every 1/2 hour (must be present to win)
- ARRL Representatives

Directions:

- I-87 to Exit 12
- West on Rt 67 to Ballston Spa
- At intersection of Rts 50 & 67, follow 50 North; look for HAMFEST signs
- In village, turn left at Citgo station on Prospect Street; up hill on left

Talk-In:

K2DLL Repeater System
PL = 91.5 Hz.
147.000 or 147.240 or 147.360
GPS Coordinates
43.007438 ° -73.855821 °

For additional Information contact: Fred Halley, W2EMS

Phone: 518-505-3733 - - - Email: Hamfest@K2DLL.org

See us at: www.K2DLL.ORG or on Facebook at: <https://www.facebook.com/K2DLL>

Field Day 2025 Shows Growth in Numbers

Field Day 2025 showed an increase in both participants and entries, compared to 2024, according to ARRL Contest Program Manager Paul Bourque, N1SFE. Overall, 4,369 entries showed 31,785 people taking part in the event. The number of EGARA members participating in Field Day also increased from the year before.

“There’s a growing interest in ham radio, especially after last year’s hurricane season and other high-profile situations in which radio has been essential,” noted Bourque. “ARRL Field Day serves as a great chance to get engaged with your local amateur radio community.”

On the public outreach front, final measurement numbers of the media coverage earned by amateur radio public information volunteers have also been tallied.

ARRL Public Relations and Outreach Manager Sierra Harrop, W5DX, reports that the total ad value equivalence (AVE) of 2025 ARRL Field Day is \$37.9 million.

“We had a tremendous response from clubs and ARRL public information volunteers this year on the heels of Ham Radio Open House into ARRL Field Day,” she said. “The ARRL Public Relations Committee prepared resources to help the volunteers succeed, but they really took it to the next level in communities across the country.”

AVE measures the amount of money that would have to be spent to buy ads in media and social media to replace the news coverage volunteers secured with press outreach. The \$37.9M figure measures only mentions of ARRL Field Day from January 1 – July 31 of each year.



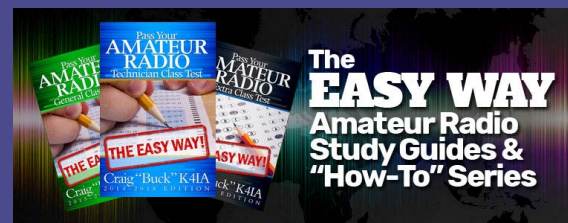
Club members Gina Pendolino, KC2QJC, works the HF bands with her father Jim, KC2HRO, during this year’s Field Day.



In 2024, the figure was \$20M, and \$18M in 2023. Harrop hopes to see further strengthening of public information volunteers leading into 2026, which ARRL has designated as the Year of the Club. Hams seeking to serve as an ARRL public information volunteer may express interest to their ARRL Section Manager.

The overall growth is encouraging to ARRL. “I’m very pleased with the amount of active ARRL Field Day participants this year. It’s nice to see more and more people participating!” said Bourque.

Get Great Gear and Shack Accessories from Our Hamfest Sponsors!



CALENDAR

September 11, 2025 @ 7 pm - Regular Club Membership Meeting - Rensselaer Co. Search & Rescue

September 13, 2025 @ 9:30 - 3 pm - East Greenbush Community Day, Town Park.

September 20, 2025 @ 10 am - 4 pm - Erie Canal Bicentennial POTA Station, USS Slater

Pro Tip: GMRS or FRS?

Handheld Family Radio Service -- or FRS -- radios are common types of walkie-talkies that don't require an FCC license, so why bother with GMRS, the General Mobile Radio Service, which does require a license?

FRS is handy for very short distances, but the added power of GMRS radios gives you the communication range you're looking for. In the right conditions, GMRS radios can reach between 5-10 miles, compared to FRS at 1-2 miles.

These are the power limitations of FRS radios compared to GMRS radios based on channel selection:

Channels 1 – 7: FRS Power 2 Watts, GMRS 5 Watts
Channels 8 – 14: Both FRS & GMRS Power 0.5 Watts
Channels 9 – 22: FRS Power 2 Watts, GMRS 50 Watts
Repeaters 1 – 8: No FRS access, GMRS 50 Watts

Get Access to Repeater Channels

GMRS radios have access to eight repeater channels, significantly maximizing their potential transmission range. This capability is not available for FRS radios but is an important feature for GMRS radios.

Talk to Other GMRS and FRS Users

GMRS and FRS radios share the same 22 channels in the 462 to 467 frequency range (70cm band). This means you can use your GMRS radio to communicate with users of both services.

The East Greenbush Amateur Radio Association

Organized in 1998, by Bert Bruins, N2FPJ, (SK) and Chris Linck, N2NEH, the East Greenbush Amateur Radio Association, an ARRL affiliate, is committed to providing emergency services, educational programs, and operating resources to amateur radio operators and residents of the Capital Region of New York State. The club station is W2EGB. The club also has several VHF and UHF repeaters open to club members and the public.



GEAR FOR SALE

Alinco DR-235 Mk3 --FM VHF Transceiver - 220 mHz, with Mobile Mount And Mic -- \$125.

Icom Id4100 Dstar Dual Band 144/440 Mic, User Manual And Nifty Mini Manual -- \$165.

Dual Band 144/440 Mobile Antenna with Mag Mount And Coax -- \$40.

Browning CB Antenna with Mag Mount -- \$30.

Military Mobile Strap On CW Key, used only twice -- \$45.

2 Meter Mag Mount Antenna -- \$25.

Kenwood Ts530 Transceiver W/Mic and Manual -- \$220.

Contact Dave at: wa2wap@verizon.net

- **VIBROPLEX "Bug" semi-automatic key.** Original "PRESENTATION" Model with Gold Plated baseplate escutcheon. Heavily chromed upper parts, bright red finger pieces, jeweled bearings. Lists for \$350, sell only \$250, plus postage if shipped. Beautiful wood case.

All equipment is working, clean and in very good condition. Contact Steve / WB2HPR by email at: stevewb2hpr@proton.me

- **Classic Hallicrafters SX-130 Receiver.** Freshly overhauled and aligned. Offers a 4 bands covering AM broadcast and shortwave from 1.725 to 31.5 MHz. Also provides for reception of code (CW), voice (AM) and upper and lower single sideband (SSB) signals. Price reduced to \$75.

Contact Bryan at: W2RBJ@Outlook.com

Sell your unused gear with a free ad in Sidebands!

Send details to: W2RBJ@Outlook.com