President's Corner
June 2009

As most of you know, I'm a sort of "renaissance man", with one foot in each of many different interests (in Victorian times I probably would have been referred to as a "naturalist" – someone who studies the breadth of the world around them, without the narrow specialization that most of today's scientists are pigeon-holed into. That's not to be confused with a *naturist*, which is someone who likes to go without clothing!). In addition to being a ham and having an electronics-oriented career, I also play music professionally, do historic research (I used to be an archaeologist), engage (with my wife) in stereo (3-D) photography, and enjoy the outdoors (particularly hiking and bicycling).

One great thing about the outdoors in this area is fossil-collecting; the region's valleys are choked with the fossilized remains of creatures - especially brachiopods and crinoids - that inhabited a shallow sea that existed in this area long before dinosaurs roamed the earth. A handful of these fossils can usually be found by spending a few minutes examining rocks in any local stream bed (small sections from the stems of crinoids look like little circular disks; brachiopods look like seashells).

I recently attended a gem & mineral show in Johnson City, in part to procure some more intriguing specimens (I wound up purchasing a small meteorite, and also a couple of bits of dinosaur egg shell and a dinosaur "coprolite" (that is, a fossilized dinosaur turd. Yes, you read that correctly!)

The other reason I went to that show was to seek out mineral specimens to test out my ultraviolet light and my civil-defense era geiger counter. "What the heck might I want with a geiger counter?" you may ask. Well, aside from it's cool "retro" look (my wife and I also collect antiques), it (and the ultraviolet light) is part of my continuing quest to expand the capabilities of my natural-born senses to include the ability to detect things that humans ordinarily cannot (you may recall a recent article I wrote about the ultrasound detector kit I purchased – same idea).

So why would write about all of this in a ham-radio related publication? Because, in a number of ways, my interest in radio is related. For one thing, my interest in radio stems from a fascination with forces unseen, like radioactivity, ultraviolet light and ultrasound. Also, ham radio intrinsically involves the expansion of one's horizons, whether it be by increasing one's technical knowledge, or through talking to people around the globe. I believe that expanding one's horizons is always worth pursuing. I also believe that it would be worthwhile for BARA to pursue expanding its horizons as well, if it is to remain a viable organization – more on this next time.

73 de allen lutins KC2KLC