



THE HAMSTER

May 2021



Next RARC Club ZOOM Meeting - May 11, 2021 @ 6:30 PM
See Page 4 for Log-in Information

PROGRAMS

Eric (KFØS) - Vice President kf0s@arri.net

Thanks to **Bob (KEØEXE)** and **Lee (WAØUIG)** for the last two programs.

It was interesting to hear how Cedar Rapids handled the **Derecho** and then one person's design and construction of a rugged and **portable AC/DC power box for emergencies**.

I hope I don't have to experience a Derecho, I am excited to take a look at Bob's emergency power box when we can get back together.

♦ **May 11, 2021**

“An Intro to EchoLink”

Presenter: Eric Van Norman (KFØS)

Radio communications without a radio. **EchoLink software** allows licensed Amateur Radio stations to communicate with one another over the Internet using Voice over IP technology. As hams may be away from home and want to communicate on the weekly net without a radio or they may just want to connect with another station over the internet, EchoLink is an option. We will have a quick discussion on what EchoLink is and how one can get started using a PC or a smart phone.

♦ **June 8, 2021**

Field Day Preparation

♦ **July 13, 2021**

“Getting started with Fox Hunting”

Volunteers Needed—Please See Steve’s (WØSTV) Proposal On Page 6

♦ **August 10, 2021**

Summer Picnic

Please let me know if you have a topic you want to share and we can put on the meeting schedule. If you have ideas you don’t want to present them yourself, but would like to learn about, let me know.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dave (KØVH) - President dcnaatz@gmail.com

The only good thing about our April "yo yo" WX has been that cold days give me incentive to operate HF indoors much like winter. A sunny warm April 17-18 with a solar storm messing up HF bands was fine, then April 19-21 was cold and 10 meters was open. Fast fading QSB, perhaps eskip with 28.400 SSB QSOs, 28.25 CW beacons and the weirdest thing: New Zealand FT8 coming in but only with beam pointed SE. When I rotated SW towards ZL no copy, then the entire band went "poof". Another 10m opening Tuesday; same thing. Ah the wonders of 10m propagation! Join us most Tuesdays at 7pm on 28.325 USB and you might learn something about 10m or find out even old timers can't predict this band.

The RARC officers had a quarterly meeting April 20th and one topic was how/when we can resume meetings using existing COVID knowledge. We are trying to develop ideas for how we can conduct a **SAFE club Field Day June 26-27** following state guidelines. Our meetings using the EOC conference room will be controlled by the city of Rochester plans but we hope they can start in 2021.

If you are reading this on the RARC site I'm again making a request that if you are a club member and not reading this via groups.io email please join [rarchams](https://groups.io) on groups.io for regular club communication emails:

- ♦ **please sign up** for the [RARC official email reflector](#) or sign up via the [RARC Website](#), click the Activities tab then email reflector tab for *MUCH* faster club information. ZOOM meeting login information is not included on the website version of the Hamster for security and privacy of the club and membership.

RARC ZOOM MEETING LOG-IN INFORMATION

Here is the information for the May 11, 2021, 6:30 PM RARC ZOOM monthly club meeting. ZOOM info is posted via the **RARC email reflector** (which is private to the subscribed 120 Rochester area Hams). The remainder of this newsletter will go on a **the RARC website front page** without the passcode. We need to balance open invitations vs having hidden (no ID) attendees on our meetings.

RARC monthly ZOOM club meeting - PLEASE POST TO YOUR CALENDAR

- ♦ **When:** May 11, 2021 @ 06:30 PM Central Time (US and Canada)

- ♦ **Join Zoom Meeting (copy & paste the link below in your browser):**
<https://zoom.us/j/93889940926?pwd=ZTZENFUvZ3YwYWN1dII4VG9PUVVWQT09>
- ♦ **Meeting ID:** 938 8994 0926
- ♦ **Passcode:** #####

- ♦ **For audio only from a mobile phone:**
Call: (312) 626-6799 US (Chicago) **Meeting ID:** 938 8994 0926 **Passcode:** #####

If we have a large internet outage we'll move to the 147.255 repeater. If there are smaller outages just use the dial in number for ZOOM via smartphone.



ARES

AMATEUR RADIO EMERGENCY SERVICES

**Steve (WØSTV) w0stv@yahoo.com
Olmsted County ARES-EC**

The **Olmsted EOC** has been remodeled with a new interior, updated equipment and new communications desks. The **Olmsted SkyWarn/ARES radio room** has two ham radio stations, using 5 radios, 1 scanner, 2 new computers with 4 monitors, and new computer programs. These include GR level 2 Analyst for weather radar, Pin Point APRS to track spotters, D-star radio to link to the state reflector and digital voice to the mobile emergency command vehicle. Additional computer programs for **WinLink email**, **Outpost BBS**, digipeater, and keyboard relaying, **Fldigi** for emergency ICS messaging, and an ARES emergency logging program. Hopefully a HamShack Hotline network to the Rochester EOC/ARES radio room, and the Rochester HIC's (hospital incident command) centers can be installed. The EM-50, mobile Em-Comm vehicle will be receiving a second ham radio station for voice, APRS, and digital communications.

The Olmsted ARES trailer is also receiving some updates. It will have two, 1 to 45 watt UHF amateur television transmitters/receivers, that include a rotor with controller unit, and cables. ARES is considering using these from a **Civil Air Patrol** airplane, to ARES for larger aerial videos of disaster zones, to be used with the RARC's drone video. ARES plans to make updates and additions to the ARES trailer to keep it up with today's communications needs.

I reviewed the **ARES/Skywarn activity for 2020** and was surprised to see that June 29th Skywarn was the only radio field event we had in Olmsted County. This is concerning to me for Olmsted ARES/Skywarn. We as emergency communicators, have had no or limited hands on field operations for over a year. We need an outdoor radio activity that works with in state Covid restrictions. The activity needs to train on communicating, and coordination between hams. It must not be limiting to attend, and be enjoyable and safe to do.



I am proposing a **mobile fox hunt**.

The fox will transmit and monitor all **APRS traffic** while driving inside the city limits of Rochester. The mobile hounds will only transmit and not monitor any APRS traffic, (using the honor system) They can use a free phone APRS app or their APRS capable radios to transmit.

A **base NCS operator** will monitor all APRS data for changing conditions of the fox and relay this to the hounds by radio to corner and catch the fox. The hunters would be groups of (?) vehicles.

The fox will have a letter taped to the rear of their vehicle that the hounds have to report to capture the fox. More details will be worked out. For those that have no idea about APRS, the RARC has two portable units to use during your turn as a hound, if you are unable to transmit APRS.



With the potential for severe weather ARES will once again review **activation SOP for Olmsted County**. The procedure would be similar for **Skywarn operations**. Here are the four levels of activation:

Level Zero (CODE GREEN): NO EMERGENCY This is the level where no perception for emergency radio operations is anticipated.

Level One (CODE YELLOW): AWARENESS AND MONITORING At this level Olmsted ARES/Skywarn should monitor local repeater(s), warning emails, and text messages. You should start your preliminary preparedness actions.

Level Two (CODE ORANGE): STANDING BY TO ACTIVATE At this level an NCS is established for a condition that is likely to happen. Radio check ins are taken for availability, and potential assignments. Active ARES/Skywarn members should be ready. Do not check into the NCS until you are ready to go. Listen and follow NCS instructions for checking in, and for net information requests.

Level Three (CODE RED): ACTIVATION At this level an emergency does exist. Level three check ins that have not been staged, will be deployed. A resource net may be activated for late check ins and outside information for large and long term events. Listen for updates and current net activity before first checking in. Keep the NCS informed of all situations that change. Keep yourself and others safe. When you have lost radio contact with your NCS, use [EchoLink](#), phone, text, or other county repeaters to make contact and relay to your NCS operator.

Level Four (CODE BLUE) DEACTIVATION At this level all active radio operators are checked out by the NCS. If you checked in and do not check out, this a safety concern for the NCS and served agency and waist time.

Final field reports are made to the NCS for the action report to the served agency.



NOTES:

The **147.255**, **146.820**, and **146.625** analog repeaters are used as primary, secondary and contingency use for emergencies in this same order. Do not contact NCS until you are ready to deploy, or effectively report from a stationary position when applicable.

Have all SE Minnesota county repeaters and the Minnesota ARES simplex frequencies programmed in your radios.

Never leave the net without informing NCS the reason and time duration you will be unable to communicate, even for a minute.

For **Skywarn** activity have at least 1/2 tank of gas in your vehicle and "ALWAYS" tell the NCS if you are operating with only an HT.

The use of **EchoLink** on your phone app is a great **Skywarn** back up to contact NCS on the 147.255 repeater when you find yourself out of radio contact.

There is a saying inside **FEMA**, (Federal Emergency Management Agency) that goes: If it was not documented it did not happen. Please keep notes on information that relates to ARES involvement, no matter how unimportant.

Information links for ARES and Skywarn: <https://www.weather.gov/arx/activation>

[Rochester Alert](#)

[Minnesota ARES](#)

[EchoLink](#)

[ARES Field Resources Manual](#)

CONTEST CORNER

Fred (K4IU) k4iu@me.com



May has a flurry of QSO parties and PSK operating activities to keep us busy during the rise of Cycle 25. The **CQ WW WPX** on May 29-30 is the CW version of the global, everyone-works-everyone, contest. You can expect a lot of activity. Both the **DL2NBY** and **WA7BNM** calendars have links to the rules for these and more of May's operating events.



Field Day is just a couple of months away. This event has always been a good source of mentoring for new and old hams. Field Day promotes operating on HF bands, as well as all bands 50 MHz and above. Additionally, hams can learn to operate in abnormal situations in less-than-optimal conditions. There's something for everyone and hopefully we will all be able to get back and put the "field" into Field Day June 26-27th.

Many RARC members use Scott's, N3FJP, excellent contest logger. If you use it, you already have a lifetime subscription for upgrades, and he recently announced version **Amateur Contact Log 6.9**. Check the website and release notes for more information.

Finally, **Contest University**, (CTU), returns for another free, live streaming event on Thursday May 20, 2021. Registration opened on April 21st. This event is sponsored by **DX Engineering**. CTU's list of professors and their **topics** look great. You won't want to miss it. The sponsors will be giving away four **Icom** radios throughout the day.





HAMSTER HINTS

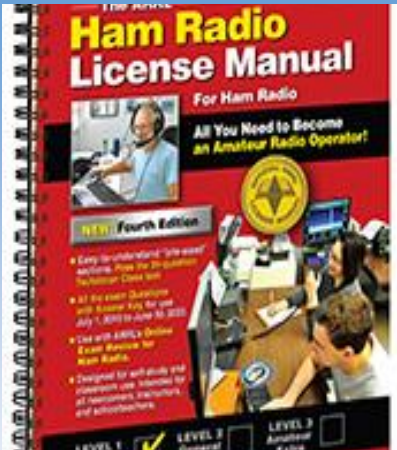
Bob (KEØEXE) gettuit@charter.net

As we prepare for **Field Day, 2021**, I offer hints to help accomplish those bigger, longer-term projects, such as the electronic kits we build or the go-bags we put together--the new things we like to "try out" as we exercise communications skills, often with a first-run on Field Day...

A long time ago, I learned the trick of finding a right-sized cardboard box, to hold the various parts for a project I have in mind, as I begin to accumulate those parts. Often this includes scraps of paper, too, with notes jotted-down spontaneously, as they come to mind over a period of weeks or even months. For me, the important thing is to capture the item or thought, so I don't lose track of it or forget it. A physical box works fairly well for this. (I'm sure many of you do this, as well; I know it's a technique that has been reinforced in me by our fellow club member, **Niel (WØVLZ)**, as I've watched him build and restore authentic "period" ham stations over the last few years.) During this planning phase, I let the ideas gel; I like to think things through really well, ahead of time. A simple, yet evolving, computer text or spreadsheet file also can be helpful for saving and organizing the ideas of a project.

Then, when the time is right to do some "real" work, I simply go get the box, and print out the file, and [hopefully!] almost everything I need is already there waiting (maybe even including some of the special tools I'll need). This helps me to follow-through on projects and enjoy them more, too.

Editors Note: *If you would like to submit articles for **Hamster Hints**, please feel free to send them to me at: gmkelm@charter.net I'll put them in the queue for upcoming issues of **THE HAMSTER**.*



EDUCATION

Bill (KØRGR) k0rgr@arrl.net

I'm looking to do another **online class in mid-May**. The first one went well, with just one student, but the only difference was the lack of live demos. That was not for lack of trying - I couldn't raise anybody on any of our repeaters. I think we need to dream up another on the air activity to keep things hopping. Of course, lots of people come out of the woodwork during **Skywarn** season.

So, if there are any potential new hams out there, I'm looking to do an online class starting May 15, 2021 and running three consecutive Saturdays from 10 AM to approx. 5 PM. The book is the current ARRL License Manual pictured above and is available for purchase from either the **ARRL** or **Amazon**.

I can be contacted via **email** or phone (507)251-5921



TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

John (KAØMYG) ka0myg@charter.net

Work has begun on an **inventory all the RARC owned equipment** to be followed by preventative maintenance. In an effort to ensure a complete inventory, if you have club equipment in your possession, please contact the committee members at club meetings, after the Sunday night net or post an email to the **RARC email reflector** on rarc.groups.io and let us know what equipment you have.

RARC WEEKLY NETS

- ♦ **Monday 8 p.m.** Elmer's Net 147.255 repeater PL Tone 100
- ♦ **Tuesday 7 p.m.** (except on Club Meeting Nights) RARC 10 Meter Net meets on 28.325 Mhz. USB. The Net is cancelled without notice if lightning in the area.
- ♦ **Thursday 6:30 p.m.** 147.255 Repeater. The first Net of each month is a voice net, and it's the SE MN District ARES Digital Net. The other weeks, it is an informal digital net, using MT63/2KL protocol and NBEMS.

Most of us use FLDIGI and the rest of the NBEMS suite of programs, all of which are free. MT63 is a very forgiving mode. You can do MT63 on VHF without a soundcard modem - 'acoustic coupling' works fine. meaning you can hold your HT up to the mic on your computer and copy it very well and do the reverse to transmit.

- ♦ **Thursday 8 p.m.** Hf Digital Net, 3583.5 kHz, Olivia 8/500
- ♦ **Daily M-F about 11:30 a.m.** - 146.625 Repeater (PL100) and EchoLink - Very Informal Morning Net - If you show up and there is no net control, become one! The object of this net is to encourage more on-air activity.
- ♦ **Saturday 8:30 p.m.** Iowa D-Star Net on RARC D-Star Repeater 443.850 or REF 53A
- ♦ **Sunday 7:30 p.m.** Minnesota D-Star Net on RARC D-Star Repeater 443.850 or REF 53A
- ♦ **Sunday 8:30 p.m.** Dodge County ARES Net on the 147.255 repeater at 8:30 p.m.
- ♦ **Sunday 9:00 p.m.** RARC/ARES Net Rotates between the 146.820 machine on even numbered Sundays and the 147.255 repeater on odd numbered Sundays at 9:00 p.m.



- ♦ **Are you a member of the ARRL?**
- ♦ **Are you new to Ham Radio?**
- ♦ **Have you been licensed for a while but not active?**
- ♦ **Are you active but never explored the ARRL?**

John (NØHZN) and **Fred (K4IU)** decided it was time to let other Hams know about the ARRL. Of course, you may think, "it's just another group that wants my money because I'm a Ham." But there is more to it than that, they truly want to grow the hobby.

So here are two links you can explore to see what the ARRL offers Hams. Take a look.

ARRL Benefits at: <http://www.arrl.org/membership>

The Value of ARRL membership: <http://www.arrl.org/files/file/QST/This%20Month%20in%20QST/October2015/Value.pdf>

CLUB FUNDRAISER

RARC is always in need of funds to operate. We have insurance costs, we have cost involved with running 3 repeaters and putting on a field day. Dues cover most of it but we need approx. 100 paid members to break even each year.

RARC now has another way to help bring funds to the club and it's painless.

SmileAmazon: Smile Amazon is a simple and automatic way to support the RARC every time you shop at Amazon.com at no cost to you. Tens of millions of products are eligible for donations.

Simply follow the link below and every time you purchase an eligible item the RARC will receive .5% of your purchase. There is no cost involved for you!

So, please use the link below, share it with others in your family and your friends. It will help out the RARC:

<https://smile.amazon.com/ch/41-1491925>



CONTACT RARC



- ♦ **WEB:** <http://www.rarchams.org/>
- ♦ **Mail:** RARC P.O. Box 1 Rochester, MN 55903
- ♦ **Email:** <https://groups.io/q/rarchams> If not a member, register and a Moderator will respond
- ♦ **Weekly Net:** Sunday at 9:00 p.m. 147.255 repeater Odd numbered Sundays
 146,820 repeater Even Numbered Sundays
- ♦ **Facebook:** [Rochester Amateur Radio Club](https://www.facebook.com/RochesterAmateurRadioClub)

Newsletter articles or questions: Mark (KØGMK) - Editor gmkelm@charter.net