



# THE HAMSTER

October 2021

*Official Monthly Newsletter of the Rochester Amateur Radio*

## MEETING PROGRAM

Eric (KFØS) - Vice President [kf0s@arrl.net](mailto:kf0s@arrl.net)

**October 12, 2021**

**Gary Sutcliffe, W9XT, Contesting, The Second Step**

Last year we had an Intro to Contesting presentation. This year, Gary will join us via Zoom and will help us take **the next step in being a successful contester**. Gary will talk about additional contesting skills, improving our shack, and ways to increase our scores.

Gary, W9XT, was first licensed in 1970 and recently presented at the **QSO Today Virtual Ham Expo**. His interests include DX (#1 Honor Roll, 5BDXCC), contests and building equipment. A retired electrical engineer, he now runs Unified Microsystems ([www.unifiedmicro.com](http://www.unifiedmicro.com)) specializing in ham antenna and other products. He has published articles in QST, QEX and has written the popular ARRL National Contest Journal Contest "Tips, Tricks & Techniques" column for 30 years.

I'm also **looking for ideas or presenters for the November and December programs**. I have an idea to do something related to antennas in November. If you have an idea or something you would like to present, let me know at [kf0s@arrl.net](mailto:kf0s@arrl.net).



# RARC OCTOBER MEETING

## The October RARC Meeting will be ZOOM Only

Here is the information for the October, 12, 2021, 6:30 PM RARC ZOOM monthly club meeting. ZOOM info is also 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. The passcode is available to members on [rarc.groups.io](#) or by contacting [K0VH](#) prior to the meeting.

- ◆ **When:** October, 12, 2021 @ 06:30 PM Central Time (US and Canada)
  
- ◆ **Join Zoom Meeting (copy & paste the link below in your browser):**  
<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/9876548873?pwd=T0JBWEFzSCtBYzhiazA1NTdDb2Rkdz09>
- ◆ **Meeting ID:** 987 654 8873
- ◆ **Passcode:** : #####
  
- ◆ **For audio only from a mobile phone:**  
**Call:** (312) 626-6799 US (Chicago) **Meeting ID:** 987 654 8873 **Passcode:** #####



# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dave (KØVH) - President [dcnaatz@gmail.com](mailto:dcnaatz@gmail.com)

We had a fun RARC meeting Sep 14th with around 20 members at the **EOC** and another 10 or so on Zoom. This followed the Sep 12th **Med City Marathon**, our biggest public service activity in about 2 years. Look for more information in this **Hamster** issue on other hot topics like **ARES** and the busy fall contest season which our October meeting program will highlight.

I lost my agenda at the meeting and one topic I was to bring up is a need for a Nominating Committee appointed at the October meeting to bring a new slate of officers in November and vote in the December annual meeting. Please help us find &/or volunteer as officers for 2022. From our by-laws: **Article 8.0 Nominating Committee**

*At the October meeting each year, the president shall appoint a nominating committee of three full members. It shall be the duty of this committee to nominate candidates for election to the various officer-director positions at the next annual meeting of members. The Nominating Committee shall solicit suggestions for nominations from the members and shall report its nominations at the regular meeting of members in the following November. More than one candidate may be nominated for each position to be filled.*

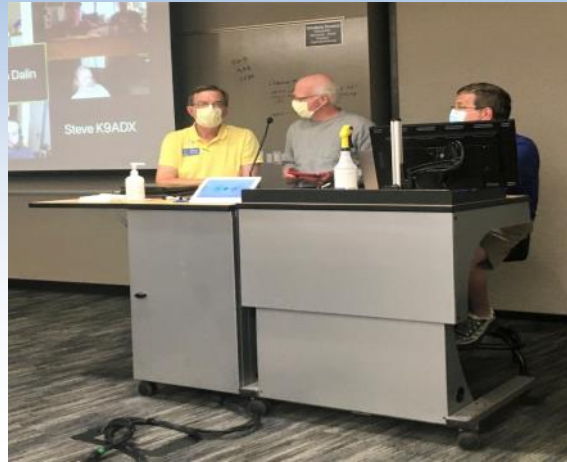
Based on recent comments I would like to also look for **volunteers for a short term workgroup on how to recruit & educate new hams**. This is clearly tied to long term education plans, the JM HS club, but also use a bunch of new connections like the RARC Facebook page, other clubs needing communications (snowmobiling), and ideas you have. I'd like a mix in this group of newer and experienced hams so please consider helping.

Our next meeting is Tuesday October 12th. I know it's more fun being back at the NE Fire Station EOC conference room BUT I am thinking **for October let's do ZOOM ONLY** because the outside presenter for the program is going to be on Zoom (like our Iowa Derecho presenter last winter). Please also stay tuned via [groups.io](https://groups.io), the [rarchhams.org](http://rarchhams.org) website, Sunday 9pm ARES nets and our 82 and 255 repeaters *if we need to make last minute changes to this plan*. If you have opinions on how we should handle future meetings do email me [dcnaatz@gmail.com](mailto:dcnaatz@gmail.com). I would like to return in person @ EOC later this year with a ZOOM option.



# SEPTEMBER 14TH MEETING

Rochester EOC—Fire Station #2





# PARKS ON THE AIR ® (POTA)

Mark (K0GMK) [K0GMK@arrl.net](mailto:K0GMK@arrl.net) Hamster Editor

Perhaps you've heard talk on the repeaters or on one of the Nets about Parks On The Air (POTA) You might be interested and think that it could be **fun to operate your rig and antenna remotely in a beautiful outdoor setting.**

In a nutshell it's all about operating in a state or national park, state trail, national monument, historical location or battlefield and making at least 10 QSOs to "activate" the entity. It's as simple as that, but there are a few rules.

Take a look at the Parks On The Air website, view the FAQ page, the Help/Getting Started section and perhaps view some of the getting started videos by seasoned POTA operators. If you are interested in becoming an Activator fill out the sign-up to become a member and get started.

**Did you know that there is a POTA entity in Rochester?**

Take a look at the map of entities to see the wealth of entities to activate close to Rochester as well.

POTA is a great way to enjoy Ham radio and enjoy the bonus of being outdoors!

**You won't regret the experience.**

# CONTEST CORNER



Fred (K4IU) [k4iu@me.com](mailto:k4iu@me.com)

**October is full of weekend QSO parties** and ends with the [CQWW phone](#) contest on the 30-31st. This is one of the biggest SSB contests of the year. Even if you have a modest station there will be DX for you to work. So if you can get on for a little or a lot that weekend you won't be disappointed. The [Minnesota Wireless Association](#), (MWA), is also encouraging active and inactive members to jump into this contest season. [Joining](#) is simple with just a few keystrokes. **The full October schedule of HF operating** can be seen on the [DL2NBY](#) and [WA7BNM](#) calendars.

-----

During this pandemic we have all gotten familiar with Webinars and Zoom meetings. The good news is that there is a lot of opportunity to learn something new right from your home. Consider the [ARRL Learning Network](#). This is a great resource for ARRL members that Eric, KFØS, used during September's RARC's meeting. There is an archive of previous webinars on various topics and new ones coming up. For example, on **Tuesday, October the 5<sup>th</sup>** , **Working the pileup** featuring Ron Delpiere-Smith, KD9IPO will be presented. This is a timely seminar that will help you get ready for not only contesting but also DXing. You won't want to miss it. You'll probably find some other first class presentations while you're looking.

# HAMSTER HINTS



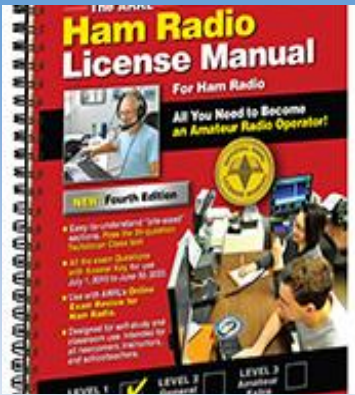
Bob (KEØEXE) [gettuit@charter.net](mailto:gettuit@charter.net)

**When I got my first 2m HT, I wanted to put together a nice "kit" that I could grab quickly, on my way out the door, to know I would have everything I'd need for portable, short-range operation. (Half the fun of "hamming," for me, is getting everything**

ready!)

I found a right-sized, soft-sided bag, then made a thin, wooden shell to go inside (for added protection and to easily utilize the full volume of the bag). To protect the radio, itself, I fashioned a block of foam-rubber, with a sewn, cloth cover. The foam had to be cut to size, and also a cavity had to be hollowed-out which was the approximate size of the HT. To cut the basic block, I rigged a "hot" wire, by stretching a steel guitar string between two supports and running a controlled current through it. The blind hole on the inside was made by heating a metal rod which was suspended, horizontally, above a table, and held in place only at one end, in a vice. I would heat it with a propane torch, then slide the foam block onto it, to the depth of the hole I wanted. I would then slide the foam block perpendicularly to the "first" slide, to melt a planar void through the foam. Repeating four times (with rotations between)—and then turning the block inside-out and slicing-off the inner-most chunk of foam—gave me a nice-looking, rectangular cavity, open only at its top. Other, smaller pieces of padding were installed inside the wood shell, to protect other components (battery packs, coiled-up antennas, etc.). A zipper-pocket on the bag's side holds the radio's Operators Manual.

As I've added a few accessories over the years, this go-bag's interior has become quite crowded—always be sure to begin with a large-enough bag!



# EDUCATION

Bill (KØRGR) [k0rgr@arrl.net](mailto:k0rgr@arrl.net)

**Unfortunately the Technician Class that was scheduled to start on Saturday, Sept. 18 was cancelled due to events beyond my control.** We hope to still schedule a class in the near future, if possible.

Prospective students will need to contact me, [wfosler@gmail.com](mailto:wfosler@gmail.com), to plan a potential date for an upcoming class. The book for the class is the ARRL Ham Radio License Manual, and students will need to read the first four chapters prior to class.

Since the onset of COVID, I've had very few students. I need to try to reconnect with Community Ed to see if we can get back in their next catalog. But we should also seek opportunities to recruit students. My mobility is zero now, so we need ideas and 'boots on the ground'.

Volunteers?

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



# TECHNICAL COMMITTEE



**John (KAØMYG)** [ka0myg@charter.net](mailto:ka0myg@charter.net)

The **Technical Committee** will be meeting soon to start the process of planning for a **remote HF Ham radio station for the club**. A remote HF station can be operated remotely by computer eliminating the need for an antenna and HF transceiver wherever you are located, have internet access and a computer. This type of station is particularly useful for those Hams living in a location where a HF Ham radio station is not feasible such as an apartment building, HOA or a retirement facility. More information will be published in this column as progress is made.

Work continues 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 RARC 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](http://rarc.groups.io) and let us know what equipment you have.

# ARES



## AMATEUR RADIO EMERGENCY SERVICE

**Steve (WØSTV) [w0stv@yahoo.com](mailto:w0stv@yahoo.com)  
Olmsted County ARES-EC**

**You may have heard the saying "All dressed up and no where to go".**

That is how **ARES** feels at times. The public service events have been reduced to half of what they were in 2019. Our **Skywarn** call outs have been very few. The question is what and how do you keep your equipment ready and communications effective? I found trying new things to stay active is the key. This year I helped with public service events in other counties and from those contacts I was asked to attend other events.

I attend other ARES, and radio club meetings, check into other county nets, either by radio (locally) and on EchoLink by repeater (147.255 or computer (distant). I learn new things and review others from **YouTube** and the internet.

I went through my equipment to make sure it is ready to go. You'd be surprised what time does to things. Plus, you will remember what you have and how it works.

To stay radio active we have restarted the southeast Minnesota Elmer's net on Mondays at 8 pm (soon to be 7:00 pm) on the 147.255 repeater. We have the 10 meter HF net Tuesdays at 7:00 pm on 28.325 USB. There is the SE Minnesota ARES "VOICE" and digital net on the 147.255 pl100 repeater on Thursdays at 6:30 pm. These are places to learn what they offer and teach. The best is getting to know more people!

- Continued On Next Page -



Another way to stay active is when ever you turn on your radio give your callsign. Many people say the repeaters are dead, and they may be right, but if you just listen then you are part of the problem. It's great to see a call turn into a group of people talking just from that one call. Do not be discouraged if you do not get replies. Not everyone is on the radio at the same time. We need to be effective to be able to be helpful to others when that time comes.

The **ARES SET** is scheduled for October 2-3 weekend. To effectively address your communications needs, contact [w0stv@yahoo.com](mailto:w0stv@yahoo.com) indicating how you would like to participate.

### **Some radio basics you should always observe:**

- Always listen before giving your call or talking on the radio.
- To join a radio conversation, give you call during the dropped carrier
- The next station to talk in a group is the one that acknowledges the new call sign.
- Always give your call, drop the carrier before continuing to talk to avoid doubling in a non round table discussion.
- Always give the station's call who you want to contact before giving your own. This gets their attention to listen.
- Remember repeaters will time out during continuous talking, its usually 3 minutes.



# 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 or SkyWarn activation.
- ♦ **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 (PL tone 100) 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.

# 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 approximately 100 paid members to break even each year.

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

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 click on the picture below, share it with others in your family and your friends. It will help out the RARC:





- ♦ **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**
- ♦ **The Value of ARRL Membership**

