



# THE HAMSTER

December 2021

*Official Monthly Newsletter of the Rochester Amateur Radio Club*

## MEETING PROGRAMS

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

***December 14, 2021***

### **An Introduction to VHF Contesting and Roving, Dan (N0SPN)**

With the ARRL VHF Contest coming up in January 2022, this is a good time to have an introduction to VHF contesting. Some of you may not have HF equipment, or maybe only use your VHF/UHF equipment to talk through repeaters. VHF contesting is different than contesting on the low bands, and we will discuss some of those differences. **Dan will talk about equipment and VHF contesting in general, Roving and how you can use it to help increase your score will also be discussed.**

***January 11, 2022***

### **Holiday Party, Charlie's Eatery and Pub**

Our Holiday party this year will be at [Charlie's Eatery & Pub](#). Charlie's is located in the **Hillcrest Shopping Center** and we should have the North dining room available to us. At this point we haven't determined a menu. We will continue planning during the December RARC meeting and on our [groups.io](#) email group. We will likely set a plan for either a buffet option or a choice of meals option (beef, pork, chicken or seafood). Current plan is having a **Happy Hour starting around 5:30 with the meal served at 6:30**. We look forward to celebrating with members and their families with an evening of good food and fun. Watch your RARC email for more details upcoming.



# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

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

**This is my last RARC President's message.** It's been a fun and somewhat *unpredictable* 2 years in the job. As a plug for whoever will be the next President, it's really not that hard of a job. Remember it's not really a "job", but a volunteer assignment, something to have fun with. You craft a short monthly note for the newsletter and run the business meeting every 2nd Tuesday. I think most of our members can do that. The VP occasionally fills in for the president and sets up programs and fun stuff like the picnic and holiday party (we have 9 months of meeting topic ideas for 2022 already). Also, I am asking a few of our computer technical hams to do the Zoom operations as needed, so that shouldn't concern anyone.

*Please consider doing one of these roles for the club in 2022: contact W0STV, K4IU or KC0CJP.*

Relating to what was *unpredictable* of course COVID was the main culprit. I still recall W0VTT's March 2020 DXpedition RARC presentation to a FULL EOC room a few days before the first COVID shutdown. Then no face-to-face meetings for over a year. A lot of people don't like ZOOM but it allowed us to continue and can still be used especially for small committee meetings and backups for the monthly club meetings.

The plan for December is we'll have our annual voters meeting (with a holiday party in January at Charlie's). **I am looking for a volunteer to chair the Technical committee in 2022** as well. Current chair John (KA0MYG) is staying in the committee and will help the transition. You should be familiar with our repeaters, but the good news is 82 and 625 are new as of 15 month ago.

We'd also like rotating **volunteers to visit JM high school 2:45-3:30 PM on Thursdays**, encouraging the students to get involved in radio communications.

Our next meeting is Tuesday Dec 14. The plan is to be at the Fire station EOC with an optional ZOOM connection. Please bring masks if you're attending the fire station (city rules) and also stay tuned via our [groups.io](https://groups.io), the [rarchhams.org](https://rarchhams.org) website, Sunday 9pm ARES nets and our 82 and 255 repeaters *if we need to make last minute changes to this plan.*



# EDITOR'S NOTES

Mark - (K0GMK) Hamster Editor

The **December 14th RARC meeting** at Fire Station #2 (EOC) will include **election of club officers**. If you are interested in volunteering for a leadership role in the Rochester Amateur Radio Club please contact one of the **members of the search committee (W0STV, K4IU or KC0CJP)** and *let them know that you are interested.*

**RARC is looking for a new Technical Committee chair for 2022.** The current chair John (KA0MYG) is staying with the committee and will assist with the transition. If you have experience with repeaters, web sites or computers we are looking for you!

The **John Marshall High School Amateur Radio Club** began meeting again on Thursdays from 2:45 to 3:30 PM. **The club is led by Melissa Erickson (KE0WNH), John Marshall educator.** Radio clubs such as this are one of the educational initiatives being conducted by RARC to help grow the hobby and RARC. We need volunteers and if you would like to help, please contact Steve (W0STV) via [email](#) or on the repeater of the week. Any assistance will be greatly appreciated.

Remember to mark your calendar for the annual **RARC Holiday Party** on Tuesday, January 11th at [Charlie's Eatery and Pub](#) in the Hillcrest Shopping Center starting with happy hour at 5:30 PM and dinner served at 6:30 PM. The dinner plan/menu will be decided at the RARC December club meeting. Watch your RARC email for further information.

Finally, I want to **thank the 2021 RARC slate of officers for their leadership and guidance of our club**. Dave Naatz (K0VH), RARC President, has announced that he will not seek re-election. Dave has served for two difficult years during a time with the COVID-19 shutdown and the adoption of the ZOOM online meeting so that club business and activities could continue. Well done Dave!

*Please feel free to contact me if you have any ideas to improve the Hamster or would like to contribute to the Hamster. We are always looking for content and ideas.*

Mark



## Optional December RARC ZOOM Meeting Info

Here is the information for the December 14, 2021, 6:30 PM **Optional** 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 [KOVH](#) prior to the meeting.

- ◆ **When:** December 14, 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:** #####

# HAMSTER HINTS



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

**Over the years**, I've set up quite a few work-spaces--usually some sort of computer desk. Ergonomics is always important, and a prime example of this is a radio-desk, in a Shack. (It's important to be comfortable when engaging in several hours of "work"!)

I hate having cold feet, so I usually put an electric heater under the table. A concern is forgetting to turn it off when I'm finished working. Exclusively, I've solved this problem by screwing a switched, AC Power Strip to the underside of the desk, positioning it so the switch is near the front edge of the desk. The heater gets plugged-in there, as well as my floor- or desk-lamps. With one, easy "flip," it all turns on. Because I don't leave lights on when I'm done in a room, it also becomes nearly impossible to mindlessly leave the heater running. Another big issue is having adequate knee-room. My [sometimes custom-built] desk-tops always have plenty of side-to-side room, underneath, for a swivel-chair, and I rarely implement a pencil drawer (unless it is already built-in *and very thin*, top-to-bottom). This allows the work surface to be at a good height for a keyboard, code-keys, microphones, and for writing. However, the difficulty with a thin table-top can be a lack of stiffness. To solve this, I install (glued, if possible) an oak 1x2 (or even a 1x4 or 2x4, the "thin way") across the underside of the top, near the front. Finally, a wheeled chair, on a good mat, is a must. I am still solving the static-charge problem, caused by rolling a chair around on a vinyl mat, especially in the dry season. I've sometimes grounded the chair's frame, using an ESD coily-cord, but a tethered chair *is generally inconvenient*. I've not found a drag-chain to be very effective. I am hoping that correctly-sized, "low static" replacement wheels will become available soon (I have seen a hint of some, from at least one manufacturer). I have yet to try--but have heard it is also quite effective--an anti-static spray, on the mat, itself.

**This month, here's a bonus tip!** For recycling those plastic, blue-and-white bubble-wrap bags from Amazon, the paper mailing labels can be removed, cleanly, if you pull them off *very slowly* (wait until you are relaxing in your favorite chair, maybe during a hands-free conversation). Or simply hack-out the label with a scissors. The bags can then be saved-up and dropped off at several stores in town, including the entrance area of Target. (I'm not sure if they can go with normal, curbside recycling; I think not.)

**Next month:** Something *more technical!*



# CONTEST CORNER

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

**2021 comes to a close this month but the contesting definitely does not! The most popular contests in December are the ARRL sponsored 160-meter and 10-meter contests.**

Getting enough wire up for 160 meters might be tough for those of us living inside the city limits. A half wave dipole is 285 feet! But a quick Google search will illustrate several “shorty” versions which will fit into an ordinary city lot. The [160-meter contest](#) starts on the first full weekend in December, 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup>.

On the second full weekend of December the [10-meter contest](#) gets underway. It starts at 0000 UTC Saturday and runs through 2359 UTC Sunday (December 11-12, 2021). Since 10 meters is at other end of the HF spectrum a halfwave dipole is only 22 feet and can be tucked away in many lots. It might even be “cloaked” by hams living in restrictive QTHs. Technicians don’t forget you have CW, SSB and digital privileges on 10 meters. Don’t have a 10-meter antenna? Here’s one [of K7AGE’s YouTube videos](#) on how to make yours.

The rest of the schedule for December contests can be seen on the [DL2NBY](#) and [WA7BNM](#) calendars.

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A popular contest website is [3830.scores](#). This is a fast, convenient way for you to post your score for a contest and share it with others. We can thank Bruce Horn, WA7BNM, for this tool as well as the contest calendars we use.

If you want to report your score after the contest, just go to the website and self-report your results on the appropriate contest form selected from the left panel seen in the picture on the following page.

# CONTEST CORNER (continued)

Find rules at:  
<http://www.arrl.org/sweepstakes>  
 Log/rules info courtesy of WA7BNM Contest Calendar.

Submitter's E-mail Address\*   Send copy to this e-mail address.

Call Used\*  Operator(s) Call(s)  Station Call

Class Key: Single Op=Single Op Unassisted, SO Unlimited=Single Op Assisted

Class\*  Power\*  Check all that apply:  SO2R  Remote operation

Op Time (hrs)  QTH  Club

Summary:

QSOs

160

80

40

20

15

10

Total\*  Sections\*  Total Score\*

In this example box 1 is the name of the contest, i.e. [CW Sweepstakes](http://www.arrl.org/sweepstakes). Fill out the boxes with your station and operator details. Chose the appropriate contest category and power class. Include a club if you want from the drop-down box. Your logger contest summary can give you the QSO number and multipliers and claimed score as illustrated in box 2. There is a submit button at the bottom of the page. Once your score is submitted you can do a lot of comparisons with other contestants. They might be club members, or contestants with similar stations, power and entrant categories. In the screen

shot below I highlighted my CW Sweepstakes results in comparison with other Minnesota Wireless Association, (MWA) members, some in different categories.

Single Op QRP							
Call	SO2R	Remote	QSOs	Sections	Op Time	Score	Club
WI9WI			450	77	16	69,300	MWA
K0UU			88	28	6	4,928	MWA

SO Unlimited HP							
Call	SO2R	Remote	QSOs	Sections	Op Time	Score	Club
K0PC			718	84	14	120,624	MWA
K4IU			622	82	14	102,008	MWA
N0BUI			600	83	19.3	99,600	MWA
K0MD			595	82		97,580	MWA
K10F			567	84	16	95,256	MWA
K0TG			543	84	13	91,224	MWA
N10K			217	69	7.9	29,946	MWA
W0ERP			163	77		25,102	MWA
K1KD			178	58	2	20,648	MWA

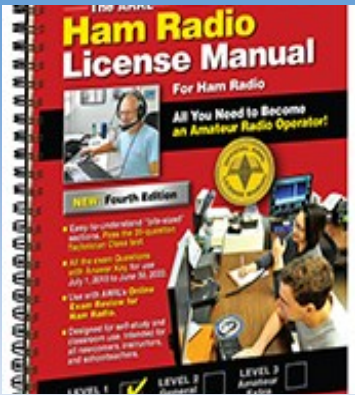
SO Unlimited LP							
Call	SO2R	Remote	QSOs	Sections	Op Time	Score	Club
NE9U	x		1018	84	24	171,024	MWA
K0AD		x	807	84	16	135,576	MWA
W0PI			625	82		102,500	MWA
AA0AW			518	83	15	85,988	MWA
KB9S			465	84	12	78,120	MWA
K0KX			109	83	4	18,094	MWA

SO Unlimited QRP							
Call	SO2R	Remote	QSOs	Sections	Op Time	Score	Club
N0UR			512	80	18	81,920	MWA

The [3830 website](http://www.3830.com) has been around for many years going back to 2002. So, you could go back and look at how you did from contest to contest annually in one convenient location.

Finally, the Field Day results for RARC are listed in December's QST page 66-71. You can find the line scores [here](#). Our entrant, K0T, did very well finishing in the top twenty nationwide for Class 2A. Way to go everyone!



# EDUCATION

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

A **RARC Education Committee** has been convened and met to assist in:

- ♦ Technician student class content development (online and/or in-person).
- ♦ Development of High School radio club activities.
- ♦ Assist Melissa (KE0WNH) John Marshall HS educator with the HS program.
- ♦ Assist Bill (KØRGR) with his program if requested.

## **Members of the Education Committee are:**

- ♦ Melissa (KE0WNH)
- ♦ Dave (K0VH)
- ♦ Steve (W0STV)
- ♦ Bob (KE0EXE)
- ♦ Ben (KU0HN)
- ♦ Bill (KØRGR)
- ♦ Colin (AA0CN)
- ♦ Mark (KØGMK)





# ARES

## AMATEUR RADIO EMERGENCY SERVICE

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

### ARES will be more active in 2022.

The **Southeast VOAD** (volunteer organizations active in disasters) group is being rebuilt. Olmsted ARES was a part of VOAD before it ended. This is an opportunity to reemerge these organizations with ARES for their communications needs as volunteers in disasters. This may require new communication tools, but its the challenge to succeed when all else fails. That is what ARES is known for. Will be developing a trained group of NCS (butt in chair) operators who will know how to operate all the communication equipment in the EOC's. Will have drills using the Rochester, Olmsted and Mayo EOC ham radio stations. At some point will attempt to have all three operational at once. I am plan to do this for the **2022 S.E.T. in October** with establish off grid field stations, that will be networking and relaying information using analog and digital modes. For 2022 we may travel to other areas as a group, to assist with their ham radio activities when requested or offered. There were several times in 2021, notices were sent out for ham radio operators to help with communications.

**I have attended Fillmore county ARES meetings** and have seen how they have arranged equipment, educate and trained their members to operate effectively. When John (KA0MYG) told me he was **discontinuing the Saturday builders group**, I saw an opportunity to duplicate the Fillmore ARES program. I have talked with Rochester EOC director Ken Jones, and received approval to have our first of many, monthly **Olmsted ARES meetings starting on December 18th from 9 to 11 AM**, with the talk in on the 147.255. repeater. Masks are required in the EOC. We will first update ARES members information, exchange contact information, and register new members.

- continued on next page -



We will discuss our mission to build a robust, multifaceted, proactive ARES program.

There will be opportunities to install, and operate new communication tools on your computers, tablets, phones and radios. Will have educational videos, hands on training, program your equipment, and you will learn to interface communications equipment, and develop effective field procedures.

**The ARES trailer will be deployed more frequently in 2022.** I want to display and operate the ARES trailer at the "**Rochester's Safe City Nights**" locations for 2022. Will need people to support these activities to make them happen. We will learn and operate together as an ARES team.

The more you know, to be so effective that you are helpful to others.

Steve-W0STV

Olmsted ARES-EC

The more preparation, the less confusion

# TECHNICAL COMMITTEE



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

**I have announced that I will be stepping down as chair of the Technical Committee** but will remain a member of the team. If you have interest in leading this group of dedicated Hams please contact one of the RARC club officers. The Saturday Builder's Group (BUG) is being discontinued in lieu of a new comprehensive ARES program. Please see this month's **ARES report** for all the details.

The **Technical Committee** has been meeting to continue the process of planning for a possible **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, we ask if you have any RARC owned equipment please contact one of the club officers and let them know what equipment you have.



# 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.**



# 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.** - Repeater Of The Week - 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 Reflector XLS632A
- ♦ **Sunday 7:30 p.m.** Minnesota D-Star Net on RARC D-Star Reflector XLS632A
- ♦ **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 Repeater on even numbered Sundays and the 147.255 Repeater on odd numbered Sundays at 9:00 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](#)

