



THE HAMSTER

March 2022

Official Monthly Newsletter of the Rochester Amateur Radio Club

Editor: G. Mark Kelm (K0GMK) gmkelm@charter.net

EDITOR'S NOTES

[Field Day 2022](#) is coming up **June 25 & 26, 2022** and **we need your help!**

If you can help out with this years Field Day, please contact [Steve \(W0STV\)](#), RARC President. **Any assistance you can provide for the event will be much appreciated.** Watch the **HAMSTER** for upcoming information and details on [Field Day 2022](#).

Be sure to check out Fred's (K4IU) **Contest Corner** for a list of upcoming contest opportunities and for you digital mode operators there is a chart that converts dB to RS(T) courtesy of the creator of WSJT-X, Joe Taylor (K1JT). **ARES** has been very busy with training and Steve (W0STV) outlines those activities and future plans on page 8. Additionally, in **Hamster Hints** beginning on page 5, Bob's (KE0EXE) excellent article on installing an attic antenna and the hazards of Vermiculite that exists in home attics across the nation. This is an important piece to read by any Ham endeavoring to install an attic antenna or work in attics of homes built before 1973.

The **March 8th, 6:30 PM RARC meeting** is **planned for in-person at the Rochester EOC** (Fire Station #2) **and on the optional ZOOM broadcast**. See Page 3 for ZOOM login and connection instructions.

*As always if you have any comments, questions, photos or would like to contribute to the **HAMSTER**, please feel free to contact [me](#) at my [email address](#) above.*



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Steve (W0STV) - President w0stv@yahoo.com



Two months as the RARC president has been interesting.

The help and input from current and past club officers has been appreciated to keep things moving smoothly. Learning the Rochester EOC multi media system and hosting zoom meetings, proves you can teach an old dog new tricks. JM needs our attention to promote their High School radio club program. They were able to get on the air for the [ARRL School Club Roundup](#) QSO party. This is the first time they have heard and seen what radio contesting is about. Melissa (KE0WNH) who teaches at JM has been a leader in promoting ham radio to the students.

We are actively researching a combined hands on/remote radio station location for hams to use. This is becoming a reality to keep hams active through life.

The **RARC needs someone to delegate field day 2022.** This is not a one person job and takes a team. Contact w0stv@yahoo.com for information. The RARC VE team had 16 people registered for testing with 11 showing up for new and upgraded licenses. Great to see young people getting into and progressing in their hobby, and for our VE team members taking the time to make a difference.

The Elmer's net will end after daylight savings time starts and begin again after daylight saving time ends in 2022. March 7th will be the last net. In its place will be radio group activates. We will attend SE Minnesota public service events including the Iowa [RAGBRAI](#), and our **ARES monthly activities**. Will try some [POTA](#), fox hunts, etc. If you have something you would like to do, please post it on the rarchams@groups.io reflector. The more you know! 73





March RARC Online Meeting Info

OPTIONAL FOR THOSE NOT ABLE TO ATTEND IN-PERSON



Here is the information for the March 8, 2022, 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 [W0STV](#) prior to the meeting.

- ♦ **When:** March 8, 2022 @ 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:** #####



MEETING PROGRAMS

Bob (K0SIR) - Vice President red@bdubke.com

March 2022 RARC Meeting Program

RARC monthly meeting starting at 6:30 PM, Tuesday, March 8th, 2022

Rochester EOC (Fire Station #2)

*** Program Topic TBA ***

Please watch this space for upcoming programs. For more information please contact Bob (K0SIR) at red@bdubke.com



HAMSTER HINTS

Bob (KEØEXE) gettuit@charter.net

We hams like to install antennas--sometimes in attics--and sometimes that work can get dusty. Here is something everyone who works in an attic must understand:

Vermiculite is a naturally-occurring mineral, which has some great thermal and fire-resistant properties. It has been installed, as insulation, in a great many house-attics, across the nation. This probably dates back at least to the large score of **vermiculite discovered in Libby, Montana, in 1881, by gold miners**. Read the following, about this mine:

*"While in operation, the **Libby mine** may have produced 80 percent of the world's supply of vermiculite. Vermiculite has been used in building insulation and as a soil conditioner. Unfortunately, the vermiculite from the Libby mine was contaminated with a toxic and highly friable form of asbestos called tremolite-actinolite series asbestos, often called Libby Amphibole asbestos (LA)." (Source: <https://cumulis.epa.gov/supercpad/SiteProfiles/index.cfm?fuseaction=second.cleanup&id=0801744>)*

Friable asbestos has been proven to cause lung cancer and other severe health problems. The EPA has been fighting a battle against dangerous uses of it since at least 1973, and as recently as 2019. This month's official "hint" is that no one should breath-in this stuff!

Now, I've noticed that I can never seem to find, anymore, an exact replacement cartridge for my respirator, at the local big-box stores. It seems like they are always selling either a different model or a different brand, and the mechanical cartridge interfaces are always incompatible.

Continued on next page

HAMSTER HINTS

Bob (KEØEXE) gettuit@charter.net



With my limited imagination, I could conclude that this is because the manufacturers are constantly improving their products, and they just can't figure out how to keep the interface the same... (It certainly couldn't be revenue-related, could it?)

Well, I'm afraid that my optimism has waned, and, quite a while ago, I just began buying any-ol', good replacement cartridges, when and where I could, whatever the brand or model. They never fit my perfectly-fine respirators, but no matter. A length of masking tape, wrapped around the interface--and pressed-down well--solves the inconvenience nicely and economically.

Bob, KEØEXE





CONTEST CORNER

Fred (K4IU) k4iu@me.com

Its March already! The days are longer, the solar flux is higher and daylight savings time is just around the corner. March also brings us the Equinox with nearly equal amounts of daylight and darkness at all latitudes. During equinox the terminator (gray) line is aligned exactly with the North and South poles giving us paths between the hemispheres that are open earlier and stay open longer.

What's in store for testers this month? The big ones will be SSB and include:

March 5-6, [ARRL International DX Contest SSB](#), This is the SSB version of the February contest and the goal for US stations is to work as many DX stations in as many DXCC entities as possible.

March 26-27, [CQ WW WPX Contest SSB](#), this contest draws thousands of entries from around the world. Everyone works everyone!

In between these favorites are a number of **QSO parties and several RTTY events** like the [BARTG HF](#), [NCJ RTTY Sprint](#) and [EA RTTY](#). Digital enthusiasts can check out the [EA PSK 63](#) weekend.

The rest of the schedule for March contests can be seen on the [DL2NBY](#) and [WA7BNM](#) calendars. Make sure to take notice of the recent improvements on the [WA7BNM](#) calendar to include a 5 week version of contest activities.

If you didn't get to the Orlando Hamcation and need a hamfest fix you'll be happy to know that the [QSO Today Virtual Ham Expo](#) returns on **March 12th and 13th**. The Expo has presentations, prizes, buildathons, exhibits and state of the art lounges for participant interaction. You can register [here](#). Tickets are \$10 until March 7th the cost goes to \$13.50.





Hams have long reported the strength of a signal received in terms of S units. But in the age of digital decoding software signal strengths are reported in terms of -DB.

So how do these reports compare with the RS(T)s many hams are more familiar with? Joe Taylor, (K1JT) and author of [WSJT-X](#), offered this comparison which I found useful. I hope you do to.

dB to RS(T) Comparison

≤ -19 529

-18 to -13 539

-12 to -7 549

-6 to -1 559

0 to +5 569

+6 to +11 579

+12 to +17 589

$\geq +18$ 599

73 for now

ARES

AMATEUR RADIO EMERGENCY SERVICE

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



Olmsted ARES has training every Saturday following the RARC meetings each month. At February's training, we viewed videos and discussed transmitting various types of information more effectively and prioritizing messages by adding a word or two to the information. We reviewed establishing and using the **P.A.C.E. communication protocol**. The third topic was being an effective radio communicator by knowing the do's and don'ts of shadowing someone. We tested the Minnesota standard VHF simplex frequencies in our radios. There were problems, but that is why we test them every month rather than during an activation.

After talking with **Fillmore County ARES EC Jim (KD0ORR)**, we are promoting any ARES group to attend the Olmsted and Fillmore ARES monthly meetings. This offers more information, topics, and discussions to learn and improve our joint communications and training needs.

I talked with **Dodge county ARES EC Marvin (KC0CLC)** to invite them to attend and train with Olmsted ARES starting in March to get acquainted with each other and to learn our counties ARES EM-COMM networking and SOP's. **The March Olmsted ARES main training topic will be WinLink**, the email that works when the internet does not!



Continued on next page



ARES

AMATEUR RADIO EMERGENCY SERVICE

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

The **Minnesota state ARES zoom conference** was on February 26th. I sent out reminders by radio and email, I hope everyone that wanted to, attended.

Mark your calendar for April 12, 2022 for the **Lacrosse National weather service SkyWarn training** session at the **Empire Event Center** located at:

[1517 16th St SW, Rochester, MN 55902](#)

We plan to have **dinner at Wild Wood bar and grill before the session for anyone.** It is walking distance to the event center.

If you purchased a **Olmsted SkyWarn Shirt** in the past please contact me at 254-3993 to arrange getting it to you. I have names but no contact information.

TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

Eric (KF0S) kf0s@hotmail.com



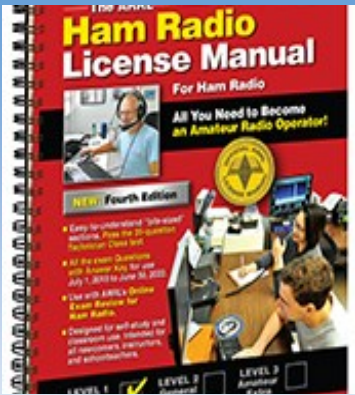
The Technical Committee had our first meeting in early February and started putting together a plan of action. If you have a desire to be on this committee, let me know at the email address above.

Our first focus is to get the 443.850 MHz **D-Star Repeater** pointed back to a reflector since the 053A reflector closed down. We decided to point it to the popular 030C reflector. We hope this can be done without any D-Star server software updates. We then plan to work on upgradeability and hopefully point the repeater to the XREF062A reflector that hosts both the Minnesota D-Star Net (Sunday @ 7:30 PM CST), the Iowa D-Star Net (Saturday @ 8:30 PM CST) and Minnesota ARES. This work is ongoing.

We also want to verify the quarterly battery maintenance for the 146.82 repeater is completed and scheduled.

Since the meeting, it's been noted that the **Fusion repeater** is also having some issues and investigation is on-going as well.

Also discussed were the proposed RARC remote HF site, the JM HS club, and RARC inventory.



EDUCATION

Bill (KØRGR) k0rgr@arrl.net

Dave (KØVH) dcnaatz@gmail.com

A **RARC Education Committee** has been convened and continues with regular meetings 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 (KØVH)
- ♦ Steve (W0STV)
- ♦ Bob (KE0EXE)
- ♦ Ben (KU0HN)
- ♦ Bill (KØRGR)
- ♦ Colin (AA0CN)
- ♦ Mark (KØGMK)





PARKS ON THE AIR ® (POTA)

Mark (K0GMK) k0gmk@arri.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

SMILE.AMAZON.COM

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](https://smile.amazon.com) is a simple and automatic way to [support the RARC](https://smile.amazon.com) every time you shop at [Amazon.com](https://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](#)

CONTACT RARC



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

*If you haven't done so already, **please** [register](#) for the **RARC groups.io email reflector** so you can keep abreast of club activities, official club notices and of course the monthly **HAMSTER** mailing. Click on [register](#) and you will be taken to the RARC registration page. Once you have [registered](#) go to your account settings and choose how you would like to receive email from the club.*

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