



THE HAMSTER

March 2023

Official Monthly Newsletter of the Rochester Amateur Radio Club

*Founded In 1932 * 50+ Years Of ARRL Affiliation*

EDITOR'S NOTES

Rochester Amateur Radio Club meets the second Tuesday of each month at 6:30 PM in the EOC of Rochester Fire Station #2 (lower level) at 2185 Wheelock Drive NE, Rochester, MN

- ♦ **March's meeting program features a presentation by Dr. Scott Wright on Hamvention 2023** See all the details on **page 3**.
- ♦ **If you can't attend the RARC meeting in person an online ZOOM broadcast is available.** See **page 4** for login information
- ♦ **Check out the new ARES Community Service section** on **page 7**
- ♦ **Melissa (KE0WNH)** reports on the activities of the **Rochester JM Rocket Radio Club** beginning on **page 8**.
- ♦ **Bob (KE0EXE)** reports on Hamster Hints that will help you with your Amateur Radio hobby. Check out his article beginning on **page 11**.
- ♦ **Contest season is in full swing.** Be sure to check out **Fred's (K4IU)** comprehensive March contesting lineup report and operating hints beginning on **page 13**.
- **Be sure to pay your [RARC dues](#) ASAP.**



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Steve (W0STV) - President w0stv@yahoo.com

Another year as your RARC president allows me to make the club an extension of your interest, and learn new things related to ham radio. I wish to make the club more active in 2023. Let me know of programs or presenters you want to see at the club meetings this year. Contact me on the groups io email, on the VHF radio, or call me at 254-3993 for anything ham radio club related.

Besides our **Field Day being moved to Chester Woods Park**, the club will hold three **POTA**, (Parks On The Air) group activities at different locations along the Minnesota state Douglas Trail in 2023. This can be a bring some or all of your own equipment or use the club station that will be set up for your use. We will teach you the process from loading the app, spotting yourself for other operators to find you and teach you how to log your contacts.

If there is an interest, we may hold a **fox hunt** or two. There will be more information videos posted on the RARC Facebook site as they come out.

We now have a **weekly ham coffee chat at Rooster's North starting at 9:00 am every Wednesday** for those who can attend. We have moved the last Thursday of the month RARC dinner from Byron to Charlie's eatery in the Hill Crest shopping center per Hams request, no RSVP needed.

With the worst of winter nearly over, think about that ham equipment that is outside of your shack, and/or on your vehicle. I looked at my antennas and coax, and they will need some TLC once the weather improves. Some tie straps have broken, the wire antennas are drooped more due to icing, wind and possibly birds. Use binoculars if available to save time for that initial check. Better yet, if you have or know someone with a drone camera, you can find more detailed information. The SWR may be good now but not fixing these issues soon is like a slow leak in a tire that becomes a bigger problem.

When is the last time you put your call sign out on a repeater to see who would come back? You may not hear anything but if we announce ourselves when we have a VHF radio on, we promote ham radio to new licensees to keep the hobby alive.

Think about it!

73 Steve (W0STV)

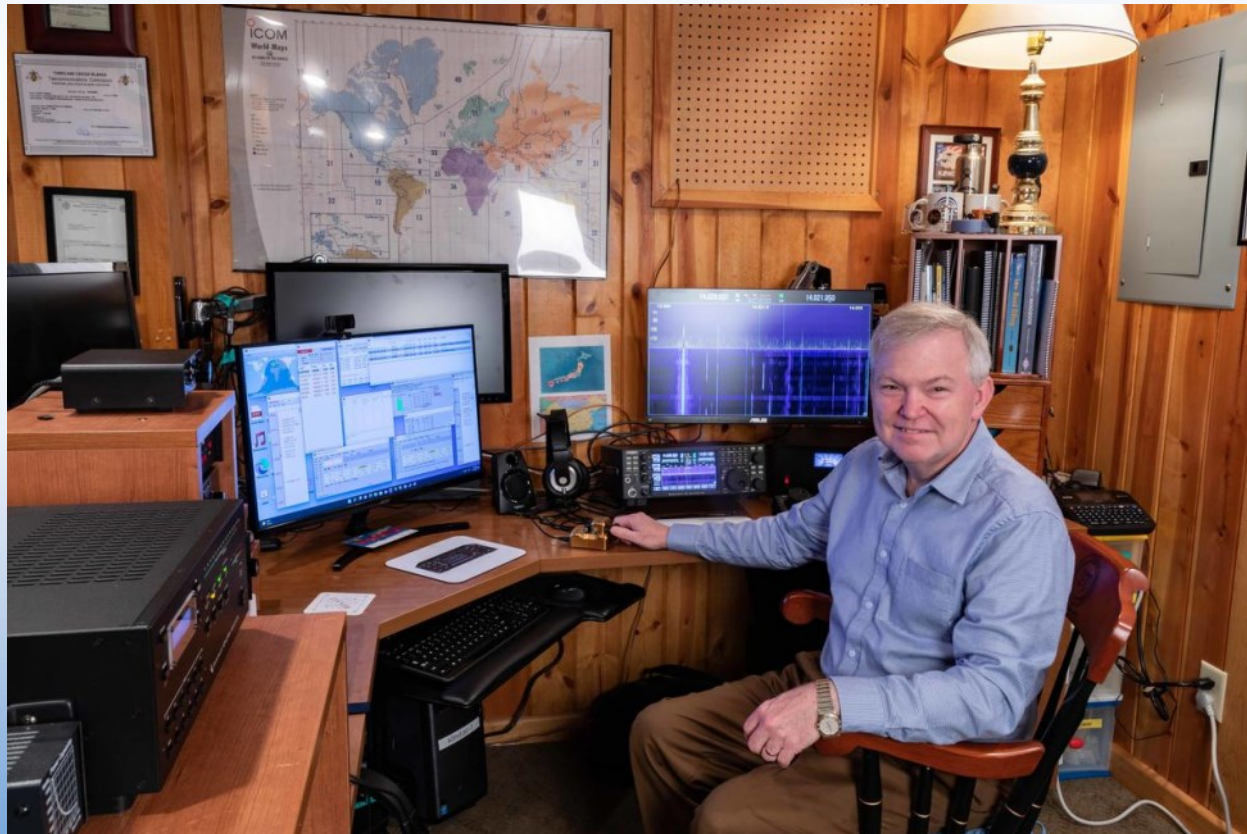


RARC MEETING PROGRAMS

Taylor (WB0RSJ) - Vice President

Hamvention 2023

Presented by Dr. Scott Wright (K0MD)





March 2023 RARC Online Login Info

OPTIONAL FOR THOSE NOT ABLE TO ATTEND IN-PERSON



Here is the information for the March 14, 2023, 6:30 PM CST RARC ZOOM monthly club meeting. The ZOOM login info is also posted via the [RARC email reflector](#) prior to the meeting.

- ♦ **When:** March 14, 2023 @ 06:30 PM CST (US and Canada)
- ♦ **Join Zoom Meeting (click on the link below):**
<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:** #####

ARES



AMATEUR RADIO EMERGENCY SERVICE

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

The first sign of spring is around the corner is the Olmsted SkyWarn training scheduled for March 29th at the Empire Event Center at 1517 16th St SW Rochester, starting at 6:30 pm.

We plan to **meet for dinner around 5:00 pm at Wild Wood** in the same general area. Please wear your SkyWarn shirts if you have them.

Speaking of shirts, I still have some shirts that people purchased before the COVID pandemic and have not picked them up. If you did purchase a shirt, (I have the names) they will be available at the next RARC meeting and at the March 29th SkyWarn training.

John Scott has stepped down as an Olmsted SkyWarn net control operator. Thank you, John for your time and contribution to the Olmsted SkyWarn program. John will still be active in the field reporting.

Dan Mussell has stepped down as the RARC public service coordinator. Olmsted ARES will be taking over the coordinating of the communications needs for our public service events. We need to actively promote ourselves to event organizers. If you hear or know of an event that you think could use our services, please contact me at w0stv@yahoo.com.

Last year SEVERAL counties requested **mutual assistance** for their public service events. Olmsted ARES will forward these requests through our groups io email for Ham operators to respond. **There will be active training for our ARES to work in a new location with new Hams, net control operators and to be self-sufficient to travel and effectively communicate in a new environment.** The more you train the less you fail.

ARES



AMATEUR RADIO EMERGENCY SERVICE

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

Olmsted ARES now has a portable 2-meter 100-watt Motorola repeater with a trailered 75-foot crank up tower for communications. The equipment is staged at the **Olmsted EOC** garage and is available to ARES or public service groups.

Some of you will date yourselves and laugh at the statement to promote the repeaters availability: 'Have repeater will travel.'" **Please make sure you have the SE Minnesota area repeaters and simplex frequencies in your radio(s) memory bank with extra power packs.**

Training to use the states Aluma portable radio tower will be scheduled later this spring. We will invite other ARES groups to qualify and use the tower once their training is complete. John Dalin and I will be in contact with the Rochester EOC director for updates on their drills and training sessions for 2023.

Olmsted ARES will meet a week later this month. Instead of March 18th it will be on March 25th. I am at Camp Ripley on March 18th for training.

**Steve (WØSTV)
Olmsted ARES-EC
The more preparation, the less confusion.**



ARES COMMUNITY SERVICE

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

- **Med City Marathon: May 13th**
- **Rochester Fest parade: June 25th**
- **Scheels Healthy Human Race: August 26th**

Events will updated when more become available



JM **ROCKET** RADIO CLUB

Melissa (KE0WNH) - Mentor melissa.ke0wnh@gmail.com

Feb 14, 2023 was an exciting day for Rocket Radio!

Set Up:

On the 13th, **Mel (KC0P-ROVER)** and **Niel (W0VLZ)** trundled around in the JM Courtyard snow setting up 20m and 40m dipole antennas that were passed through a classroom window. I felt like Rapunzel with a little orange marker tag dangling from the window to indicate which one we were using.

Radio Day, Valentine's Day!

Mel (KC0P-ROVER) arrived during my 2nd class period and was able to stay in the classroom until leaving around 5pm! My classes were introduced to Mel and his love of radio along with a brief **history of IBM's contribution to the Apollo missions** and specifically Mel's older brother's work. [Russell Larson](#)

It was fun to show the students the photo of Mel's brother with astronaut Fred Haise then:



And me with **Fred Haise** last summer



JM **ROCKET** RADIO CLUB

Melissa (KE0WNH) - Mentor melissa.ke0wnh@gmail.com

Mel spoke to my Engineering and Earth & Planetary classes.

One student asked me later if he could shake Mel's hand! That same student came to the Radio Club after school. I had fun having Mel's insights and connections in the classroom, so did the kids!





JM **ROCKET** RADIO CLUB

Melissa (KE0WNH) - Mentor melissa.ke0wnh@gmail.com

Periodically during the day, Mel was making contacts in the back of the room. And like Tom Sawyer painting his fence, the students were curious to have a "Field Trip" to the back of the room where Mel introduced them to Ham Radio. During my 10th grade advisory class, one of the girls asked if she could talk on the radio: Of course! Was our answer, and she made a number of contacts.

Periodically during the day, Mel was making contacts in the back of the room. **And like Tom Sawyer painting his fence, the students were curious to have a "Field Trip" to the back of the room where Mel introduced them to Ham Radio.** During my 10th grade advisory class, one of the girls asked if she could talk on the radio: Of course! Was our answer, and she made a number of contacts. After school, more students came to make contacts

and each that tried spoke with someone. One student is very shy, so we couldn't co-ax her to the mike. **We had about 28 contacts on 20m and 1 on 40m. NY, MI, WI, OH, IA, ND, CA, TX, GA and Ontario, Canada were some that we reached.**





HAMSTER HINTS

Bob (KEØEXE) gettuit@charter.net

These cold, dark, winter evenings, I've been enjoying the simple, relaxing tasks of sorting through and re-organizing bins and drawers of small parts.

Some observations follow...

(1) I do this at the kitchen table (taking precautions to avoid being scolded for dirtying any normally-clean, "food-grade" surfaces). While doing these relatively mindless things, I'd rather be "accessible" and taking part in family conversations, than isolated in my own hobby-areas. It's just better for relationships.

(2) Ahead of time, I purchased (in "bulk" quantities) a number of sizes of clear, "poly"-bags--the kind with a "zip-seal" opening on one end. These are inexpensive, online, and they work great for storing various, similar items like nuts, washers (see photo), and lots of small, electronic components. (I.e., never use "more bag" than is needed, as you can always transfer to a bigger bag later.)





HAMSTER HINTS

Bob (KEØEXE) gettuit@charter.net

(3) It is helpful to have some temporary "sorting containers" available. These can be saved-up sets of pill bottles, plastic yogurt cups, or almost anything else that works to keep things from rolling around and getting mixed-up on a flat surface. The important thing is to get in the regular habit of hoarding this sort of thing, through time, so you have it when you need it! These are especially helpful when a sorting project needs to be interrupted, shelved, and continued at a later time. However, if not available, I often just group items by using individual piles on the table-top--and it *is easier*, that way, to see what's in each group.

(4) As I went, I tried to identify parts, sometimes adding a small, paper label to the group's bag, which will save time later, when I am looking for a particular type of thingamabob.

(5) Use this time, also, to clean the dirtiest parts and to throw away anything not worthy of saving.

(6) For the biggest stuff (or for grouping lots of smaller, "like-things" together, I've said before that one can't go wrong by investing in some uniform, clear-plastic storage bins and/or lidded, configurable drawer-trays (see photo). Pill bottles--with labels removed--are quite handy. Plastic peanut-butter jars, with lids, are a great, intermediate-size container. Remember: with any container, "transparency is your friend," as it makes it easier to find the stuff you are looking for, later!



Washers sorted by Inside Diameter (and some basic types)



CONTEST CORNER

Fred (K4IU) k4iu@me.com

Besides all the February contests the bands were busy especially for the DXers in Bouvet Island hunt! March will bring the solstice and with the surging Cycle 25 there are several contesting events that should be outstanding compared to recent years.

- **ARRL DX SSB contest**, with current conditions this phone contest should be fun and a chance to work some new ones. On the first full weekend of March 4-5 the action starts. The details are [here](#). There also are some examples of the exchange. Don't forget there should be lots of 10-meter activities for new hams checking out the contest scene. Historically, this contest brings out a world-wide number of rare and garden variety DX. Circle that calendar date! You won't want to miss the first weekend in March.
- **RTTY contests** this month include the NCJ sponsored [RTTY Sprint](#) on March the 12th and [BARTG HF RTTY](#) Contest March 18-March 20. Make sure to closely review the [rules](#) on this one.
- **[CQ WPX SSB](#) Contest** on March 25-26 is one of my favorite contests. It's another everyone works everyone event. Typically, the phone bands will light up and with current conditions 20 meters might be open night and day. Why? Equal amounts of sunlight hitting the ionosphere means paths between the north and south hemispheres will open earlier and stay open longer. New hams, you'll be surprised how well modest stations perform.

The **Virtual Ham Expo** returns on March 23-24. The theme is new hams, what now? Check out the schedule and admission fee [here](#).

So, you can see March is busy month with something for everyone every weekend. You can check out the rest of the events on the [ARRL](#) and [WA7BNM](#) calendars.

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CONTEST CORNER

New and cutting-edge technology tends to creep into our hobby all the time. For example, FT8/4 transformed much of the ham radio landscape.

Here's another example that some of you may have bumped into called [ChatGPT](#). Trained on vast amounts of text data from the internet, ChatGPT is capable of answering all types of user questions using artificial intelligence. It can even do college essays! There's a race in the tech world to incorporate this and similar tools like [perplexity](#) into search engines. I wanted to try it out. Here's the simple question I posed for this month's column.

"How can radio operators improve their scores?" Here's the response that was generated in less than 60 seconds

Ham radio contesters can improve their scores by:

- **Using high-quality equipment:** Investing in a good transceiver and antenna can make a big difference in your signal strength and ability to make contacts.
- **Operating during peak hours:** The best time to make contacts is when the most people are on the air, so make sure you're active during peak hours.
- **Utilizing multiple bands:** Operating on multiple bands can increase your chances of making contacts, as some bands may be more active than others at different times of the day or year.
- **Keeping accurate records:** Accurate record keeping can help you identify patterns in your operating and improve your strategies.
- **Joining a contest team:** Joining a contest team can provide you with additional resources and experienced operators to help you improve your score.
- **Study the rules and strategies of the contest you are participating in.**
- **Practice, practice, practice:** The more you operate, the better you will become.

Pretty impressive, but I think we will still need people like our Hamster editor, Mark (KØGMK), to keep us straight!

73 for now Fred K4IU



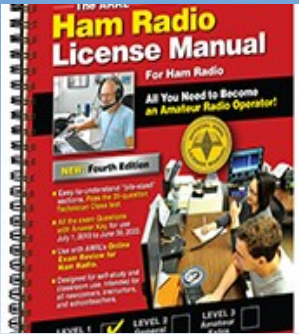
125 LIVE RADIO PROJECT

Dave Naatz (K0VH) dcnaatz@gmail.com

Steve (W0STV) confirmed **125Live** is working on our radio storage cabinet. Two runs of coax have been run from the rooftop to our radio cabinet area and left some excess on the roof to cover for elevation of antennas. If weather and rooftop conditions cooperate we may need a small crew to install antennas in March.

We'll take extra rigs from the EOC and hope to be operational in early spring 2023. After that we'll develop a plan to present Ham radio at **125Live** both to renew some with past ham radio interest and recruit new Hams.





EDUCATION

Dave (KØVH) dcnaatz@gmail.com

- **John Marshall Rocket Radio Club:** see this months JM Rocket Radio Club report beginning on page 8 for an exciting look into the classroom HF operation with Mel (KC0P) and Niel (W0VLZ)
- **125Live: Steve (W0STV)** talked to **Tony from 125Live** there about getting the two runs of coax pulled soon from the roof to the technology room where we'll eventually have a lockable cabinet for our radios. We'll take extra rigs from the EOC and hope to be operational in early spring 2023. After that we'll develop a plan to present ham radio at 125Live both to renew some with past ham radio interest and recruit new hams.
- **Education: Bill (KE0RGR)** is mentoring a newly licensed ham. **Eric Bjornson** plans to assist with mentoring too.
- FOOTNOTE: I just saw this posted for new license training from [ARRL](https://www.arrl.org/) and [Dave Casler \(KE0OG\)](#) There are a LOT of videos, but we do have something to point new hams at along with the License Manual. <https://learn.arrl.org/courses/?pathPage=%2Farrl%2Fcourses>

73 **Dave Naatz** (KØVH)



TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

Eric (KF0S) - kf0s@yahoo.com

D-Star repeater:

- Obtained, programmed and tested.
- Repeater up and running on analog. Will soon be connected to internet reflector.

147.255 repeater:

- Sensitivity and power output are reduced.
- Reported to county. They will wait until 2023 due to budget constraints.

146.82 repeater:

- Battery serviced by W0STV.

EOC computer and laptops:

- Used for 11/12/22 SET event.
- Steve has put labels on switches, headsets.

125Live

- Antenna on roof and stored on saw horses until deployment date set.
- Waiting for 125Live staff to indicated they are ready to pull coax for the station.

Drone Sale

- Progress will be updated at the February RARC meeting.



TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

Eric (KF0S) kf0s@yahoo.com

125 Live:

- VHF antenna procured. Sitting in Steve's garage.
- HF Vertical is in Steve's garage. Long piece still with county.
- Radios at EOC.
- Coax obtained.
- Tony was still out/on crouches at last notice. Likely won't return until. Will hopefully run coax soon.
- *Steve mentioned 125 Live may be hiring some runs and may include our coax.*
- Put antenna together on the roof. Leave horizontal on saw horses.
- Retain a 27" monitor for the station. Run advertising when station isn't in use to draw more attention to radio setup/club.

Other Items:

- Drone sale:
Eric to come up with a proposed sale price. DJI Phantom 3.
\$450-540 on eBay for similar packages.

Possible repeater swap:

- Steve mentioned Brian might have a swap of Motorola Fire Department repeater and cans for a smaller Kenwood repeater and cans. This would work better if we wanted to put in the trailer.

ARES trailer - potentially replace the 2 monitors with new monitors plus a 1.2 kw (or maybe 2 smaller) inverter.



RARC BUY OR SELL



I'm **looking for a Heathkit DX35 or 40** to go with it. Do any of you have one squirreled away some where? If so, please email me at the address below.

Niel (W0VLZ) - nielwiegand@aggienetwork.com



For Sale: KB9VBR - Copper J-Pole for 2 meters. Well made-heavy duty. Never mounted or used. Can't use it with the mount I have on the house currently. \$40 Taylor (WB0RSJ) - tbbauman@gmail.com



FT-991A ALL-BAND, MULTIMODE PORTABLE TRANSCEIVER The FT-991A is the next generation in all mode, all band MF/HF/VHF/UHF transceiver with C4FM (System Fusion) Digital capability. The FT-991A includes multi-mode operation on CW, AM, FM, SSB, and Digital Modes (Packet, PSK31, RTTY and C4FM), with 100 Watts of HF/50mhz Capability (50 Watts VHF/UHF). This transceiver is owned by a ham radio friend of mine. Please contact me directly. Price: \$975.00

Bob Dubke (K0SIR) red@bobdubke.com (507) 398-5964

If you have any Ham related items that you want to sell or are looking for locally, email the Hamster at RARC Buy or Sell or Trade.



WEEKLY NETS

- ♦ **Monday 8 p.m. Elmer's Net** 146.820 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.** 146.820 Repeater. The first Net of each month is a voice net, and it's the **SE MN District ARES 2 Meter Digital Net**. The other weeks, it is an informal digital net, using the digital protocol announced for the week on the Net 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. 80 Meter 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 D-Star Reflector XLS632A
- ♦ **Sunday 7:30 p.m. Minnesota D-Star Net** on D-Star Reflector XLS632A
- ♦ **Sunday 8:30 p.m. Dodge County ARES Net** on the 146.820 (PL Tone 100) Repeater at 8:30 p.m.
- ♦ **Sunday 9:00 p.m. RARC/ARES Net:** 147.255 repeater (PL Tone 100) Odd numbered Sundays
146.820 repeater (PL Tone 100) Even Numbered Sundays



- ♦ **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](#)**

The logo for the Rocky Mountain Roller Coaster Riders Club (RARC) is displayed. It features a stylized blue map of Colorado with a yellow roller coaster track winding through it. The letters 'RARC' are prominently displayed in a bold, red, italicized font with a black outline. A white star is located in the bottom right corner of the Colorado map.

- ♦ **Online** <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 (PL Tone 100) Odd numbered Sundays
146.820 repeater (PL Tone 100) Even Numbered Sundays
- ♦ **Facebook:** [Rochester Amateur Radio Club](#)

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