



THE HAMSTER

August 2023

Official Monthly Newsletter of the Rochester Amateur Radio Club

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



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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Steve (W0STV) - President w0stv@yahoo.com

Hearing more people on the repeaters has been uplifting. I know there are others listening, whether it be mic fright or you just do not know what to say, it all starts with putting your call on the air. Remember you only have to talk some of the time, the other guy has to talk the rest of the time.

Mark your calendar for the RARC picnic at the KOA in Marion on August 8th starting at 6:00 PM. This is an earlier time than our normal meetings, but we want everyone to start eating sooner. The RARC is supplying burgers, hotdogs, brats, buns, potato salad, condiments, water, plates, utensils and we will be cooking with charcoal this year. Oh yes, and there will be cheese. This is also a potluck event, if you want to bring a salad, dessert or something else please do so. There will be a short RARC meeting after dinner. **Barb and Roger have requested to attend our picnic via ZOOM from Florida. We will set up the equipment to visit and see how they are doing. RARC members may use our ZOOM link too if you are unable to attend the picnic.**

We request that you bring any amateur radio items that you want to sell or give away to the picnic. This has been very successful in the past. Remember to bring cash or your checkbook. You never know what you may find that you did not know you wanted!

We will have an FT-8 station operating at the picnic for you to try out to see how this digital mode works and if it is something you would enjoy doing. There will be a Q & A during the operating.

The Riverland Amateur Radio Club is holding a hamfest in Onalaska on Saturday August 5th from 8 AM to 1 PM. It is located at Bethany Church 3936 County Road B. The talk in frequency is 146.970 PI 131.8. The Rochester Club has purchased an indoor table for its members to sell their equipment at. There is a \$5.00 entry fee for everyone. You will be able to enter early if you are selling. We ask that you help out at the table when you can and that you make arrangements to have your items picked up, or you take home your equipment that does not sell. Put a price tag on items, along with your cell phone number in case someone has questions or wants to make an offer. You will need to make your own arrangements if you are going to be an outside tailgate seller.

A reminder of the weekly Saturday breakfast at Grandmas in the Silver Lake shopping center with ordering around 7:00 AM. Another is the weekly coffee chat at Roosters bar and grill north on Wednesdays starting at 9:00 AM. Always interesting discussions about ham radio. You will come away with knowing more than before you got there.

If you have ideas, questions, or concerns. You may email me at w0stv@yahoo.com or call me at 507-254-3993 anytime. "The More You Know"!



RARC MEETING PROGRAMS

Taylor (WB0RSJ) - Vice President

August 8th 2023 @ 6:00 PM

RARC Annual Picnic

Rochester/Marion KOA Campground



RARC is supplying burgers, hotdogs, brats, buns, water, plates, utensils, potato salad, condiments and we will be cooking with charcoal this year. Oh yes, there will be cheese. Feel free to bring an item to share.



August 2023 RARC ZOOM Online Login Info

OPTIONAL FOR THOSE NOT ABLE TO ATTEND IN-PERSON



Below is the ZOOM login information for the **August 8, 2023, 6:00 PM CDT RARC Picnic ZOOM** . The ZOOM login info is also posted via the [RARC email reflector](#) prior to the meeting.

- ◆ **When:** August 8, 2023 @ 06:00 PM CDT (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:** #####



WEEKLY NETS

- ♦ **Monday 8 p.m. Elmers' 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 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. ARES 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



ARES

AMATEUR RADIO EMERGENCY SERVICE

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

Olmsted ARES is part of both the Olmsted and Rochester EOC's emergency operations plan. For them to have confidence in our abilities we need to be proactive in our training and operations protocols. I plan on building trained groups inside our general ARES to make us more effective. Groups would be trained to operate all the radios in the EOCs using WinLink and other EM-COMM information modes, become net controllers and FEMA certified. There will be more random activities on the Sunday nets during the year. We did a training session with a simplex drill to understand our simplex capabilities after a Sunday net. The fun is to see if you can do it and learn at the same time. Please check into the Olmsted ARES actives. The more preparation, the less confusion and lost time

For our August 19th (note the date) Olmsted ARES meeting we will focus on working through unexpected issues using the training, information and equipment you have. We will use a general public service event as the forum, along with what you should bring with you. There will be a challenge presented to you by another Ham that you will need to deal with for the best outcome. You may involve other Hams to help you if and when needed. To deal with Murphy's law, everyone will invent or solve a problem that will not be known ahead if time. This will build teamwork and get you thinking of how to prepare and deal with unexpected issues from communications to an emergency situation. Bring your public service equipment and skills to this meeting for an interesting time.

To make our ARES nets educational, you will be able to check into the Sunday night nets in other ways. First is EchoLink that we already use. In August we will add our Olmsted ARES emergency email account of w0mxw@yahoo.com. For September will add APRS messaging, For October we will add WinLink by computer or radio link. There will be information prior to the next months net link option during the nets.

Reminder that the **ARES nets rotate on different repeaters.** On even dated Sundays, the nets are on 146.820. On the odd dated Sundays, the nets are on 147.255.

If you have something you want to find, understand or try with Amateur Radio, let me know and we will discuss it.

If we learn from our mistakes, it's the more you know!

**Olmsted ARES Mission Statement:
To be so effective that you are able to help others.**



ARES COMMUNITY SERVICE

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

- **Scheels Healthy Human Race: August 26th**
[Sign Up Page](#)

** Please sign up to help by clicking the link below an event above **

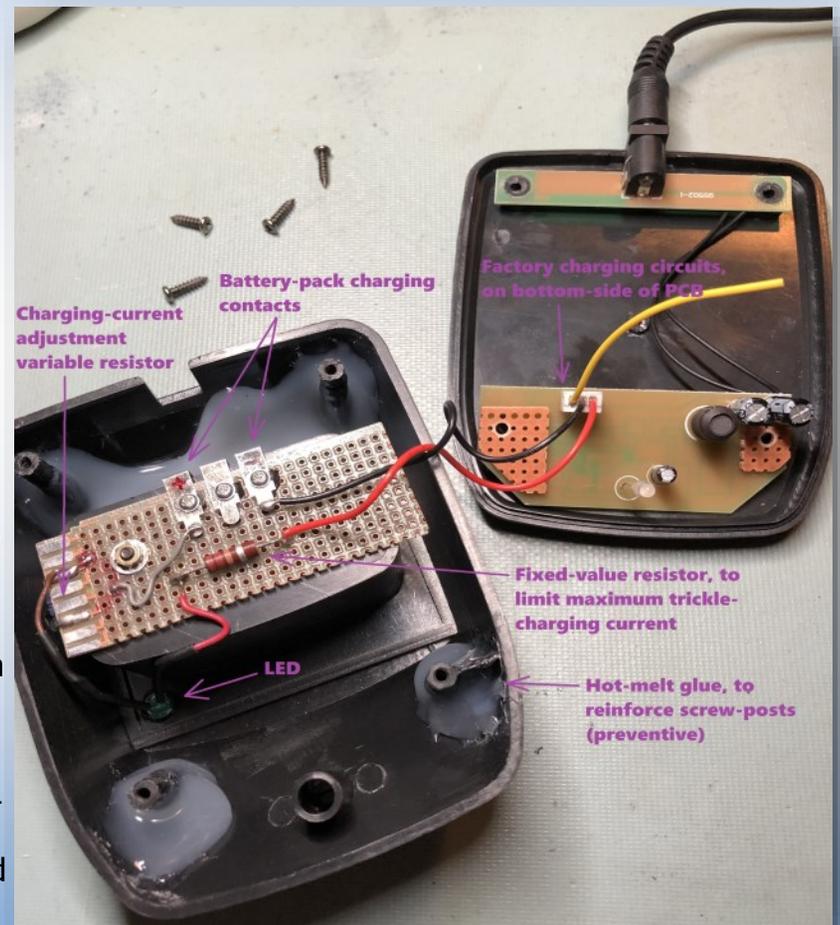


HAMSTER HINTS

Bob (KEØEXE) gettuit@charter.net

I've been slowly improving a dual-band HT that I got for free, from a friend. Because its NiCad battery-packs were dead and the special, rectangular cells are no longer available. I refurbished the packs with other NiMH cells (in the form of two 9V batteries, in each pack, with some isolation diodes--all of that is a story for another article), because that's what seemed to fit the best, mechanically, and give the highest charge-density at a decent voltage. I then needed to come up with a charger for my new packs. I finally found one that had the correctly-shaped, plastic-housing "bay" to fit these old, Icom battery packs (the only source I could find was in Spain). The charger came with internal, battery-charging electronics, but, to make a long story short, I wanted my charger to work with more than just one battery technology. As I wasn't concerned about charging time, I went with a trickle-charging approach, which is safe for a variety of rechargeable types and capacities.

I decided I could accomplish this with a simple modification to the factory charging circuit. (The original charger, by the way, appears to have some smarts, and might have worked well, unmodified, for my highly-customized battery packs; however, I wanted to play it safer. Suffice to say that I didn't want any unexpected fires.) I assumed the charger was a voltage-limited current-source, at some stage of the charging routine, so I just added a series resistor, LED, and variable resistor, in the positive lead of the charging contacts.



Charger guts, showing added circuit-board and series-wired components



HAMSTER HINTS

Bob (KEØEXE) gettuit@charter.net

The LED lights-up (usually only a tiny bit), to indicate current-flow, and the variable resistor is accessible with a flat-bladed screwdriver, through a hole drilled in the side of the charger housing. Component values (1K and 220 ohms) were chosen to allow up to a maximum current of around 20-30 mA (depending on the depletion of the battery pack) and down to just a couple of milliamperes. This way, the current could be a bit higher--and charge the battery a little faster--when the pack was at a lower voltage, while still always remaining near or in the "safe," trickle-charge region, near end-of-charging (to keep the internal cell temperatures down--internal heat is a Enemy of Recharging). The variable resistor is to be set once, to some "good" value for the packs to be charged, not "fiddled-with" throughout the charging cycles. The photo also shows the preventive, mechanical trick of reinforcing the molded screw-posts with hot-melt glue ("plastic bonder" epoxy would also work), as these posts can often break after several disassembly/reassembly-cycles. Again, I wasn't trying to produce the optimal charger here; I was trying to ensure that I had a "safe" charger that I could use with a variety of cell-technologies found in *some* of my 9-12V battery-packs for this radio, to allow leaving the battery-pack in the charger for days or weeks at a time, when it was not needed.

Now, do I buy and modify another one? Probably not; it was a lot of work!



Completed charger in operation



CONTEST CORNER

Fred (K4IU) k4iu@me.com

There have been a number of local contesters reporting their summer successes especially on RTTY. Both **KBØGT, Bob**, and **KØGMK, Mark**, were active during the **July NAQP RTTY**.

Bob reported completing WAS, (worked all states) on this mode. Another local contester, **Scott, KØMD**, made the **top ten box for last January's ARRL RTTY contest** as noted in this month's QST page 76.

Our Division Director Bill Lipert, ACØW is just back from the July 8-9 **WRTC World competition in Italy** where he and **Charlie, NGØC**, competed using the call **I46P**. Maybe they are in your log! Hopefully, we can get him to do a program for RARC on what it is like to contest with world class operators.



Bill, ACØW, setting up for WRTC competition in Italy with a contest referee



CONTEST CORNER

August starts to move us a little closer to the contest season with more QSO parties and a fun CW contest. The sunspots are giving a boost to propagation especially the higher HF bands. You can see all of the August activity on the [DL2NBY](#) and [WA7BNM](#) calendars. Here are some of the highlights for next month.

August 5 North American QSO Party, CW this is always a casual and friendly contest. It's also a good opportunity to work on CW skills. The exchange is your name and state.

August 12 Worked All Europe CW (WAE), This is also a QSO party except that the objective for US stations is to work only the 50 sovereign EU countries. There is also a twist in that you can earn additional points by passing traffic, QTCs (data of previously logged QSOs), to the EU stations. You will need to brush up on the QTC rules and use a logging program which automates the exchange. I use N1MM. A detailed explanation and implementation of N1MM features for this contest is [here](#).

August 19 SARTG WW RTTY Contest, This is a fun RTTY contest sponsored by our Scandinavian friends. The exchange is RST and a sequential serial number.

August 19 North American QSO Party, This is the SSB version of the CW NAQP. Keep in mind that this a 12-hour contest that you work 10 hours max so there is still time to enjoy the weekend. Power is limited to 100 watts.

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CONTEST CORNER

We're all aware of the importance of branding in the business world. But it's also important in contesting. Why? Well think about this; **The American Radio Relay League (ARRL) uses the call sign W1AW to represent its headquarters.** The ARRL is a well-respected organization in the ham radio community, and it's call sign is instantly recognizable. You can think of others like K1JT (Joe Taylor), K3LR or W3LPL.

On a crowded spectrum scope or packet cluster, call recognition helps distinguish your call from competitors. It enables other Hams to recognize and remember your call and, more importantly, try to get you in their log!

If you are active on the bands other contesters remember you which promotes fellowship and repeat "business". Here are what I see as opportunities to becoming more well-known in the ham radio community and make it easier for other Hams to find you:

- **For SSB contests** be active in QSO parties as well as DX contests. If you have a favorite net take a stab at being the net control. Some well-known SSBers have distinctive voice and mannerisms that sometimes make them identifiable even before they give out their call. Others are uniquely helpful and friendly. You should try to make a good impression which will make people more likely to remember you.



CONTEST CORNER

- **Digital contests**, either RTTY or FT/x, print or decode your call visibly so other Hams will develop recognition on those waterfalls. Non-contest, daily or weekend cameo appearances further promote your call to even more Hams who will want to put you in their contest log. Thursday nights there are usually short 30-minute practice sprints that not only let you make sure radio hardware and software are working but get your call noticed more often.
- **CW contests** also give you a chance to get your call out audibly. The reverse beacon networks, [RBN](#), and spotting networks are your friends for CW and RTTY. There are weekly and even daily opportunities to encourage call recognition. You could get on the air for any of the CWops mini contests, slow speed nights or medium speed nights. Just check the [WA7BNM](#) calendar.

In summary, branding plays a crucial role in creating call recognition, ham loyalty, and identity. Don't forget about QSLs/QSLing, apparel, vanity plates or even sprucing up your QRZ page and social media pages/ blogs with your call sign.

73 for now

Fred K4IU



TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

Eric (KF0S) - kf0s@yahoo.com

Technical Committee Meeting - 7/10/2023

Attendees: Eric, Dave N., Steve, George, John D., Taylor

Post meeting and RARC meeting comments in italics

443.85 D-Star repeater:

- Now ready to reinstall Gateway Server software.
- Investigating RockyOS as a supported copy of CentOS7 which goes EOL next summer.
- Plan is to try and have things installed at back at Mayo this month.
- *Discussion on main reflector: 30C was decided back in March.*
- *Also, George asked about setting up g2_link software to allow access to XRFxxxX and DCSxxxX reflectors.*

146.625 Fusion repeater:

- Possibly it's ID-ing more frequently. Maybe being kerchunk'd.
 - Maybe check settings when we are at Mayo.
 - We did not notice excessive ID-ing during the tech committee call.
- Analog/Digital are working fine.

146.82 repeater:

- Temperature battery replaced by John Scott.



TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

Eric (KF0S) - kf0s@yahoo.com

147.255 repeater:

- Steve has asked people to call/email if they have sensitivity issues. Time, ambient conditions, distance from repeater.

Rochester EOC facility and computers:

- Batteries replaced in trailer.
- Trailer and EOC used for Field Day.
- Anything from above usage we need to procure?
 - Dummy load - 100W - HF-VHF
 - High quality RG-8X jumpers.
 - Steve may donate 3 4' lengths.
 - Cushioned folding chairs - arms may be desired.
 - Can move 4 white folding chairs to black trailer.
- Head phone splitter/amp and maybe headphones. Had people listening in on speakers. Similar to what's in the EOC.
 - BH photo and Video - \$30 for splitter
 - Bounty Hunter headset - individual volume per side. Not sure if they are recommended yet. John D is testing.
 - Cheap speaker

125 Live:

- Cabinet and shelving are done.
- Kenwood HF and VHF radios, with the 35-amp power supply, and the MFJ automatic antenna tuner have been delivered to 125 Live.
- Dell EOC computer for digital.



TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

Eric (KF0S) - kf0s@yahoo.com

- **Antenna work is waiting on HVAC work to be completed on the roof.**
Sounds like work will be completed in August.
Get a date to notify 125 Live and get antenna put together on the roof.
- **Cans:**
John will take one set of cans, Decibel DB-4048
John hasn't had time to pick them up yet.
This leaves one set of cans remaining. Decibel TDD-7200A-C. Check the market. List on Facebook or Craigs list. Shipping is the issue.
Saw one set of cans at St. Paul hamfest. Seller had no idea on what to ask for it
Take with to Onalaska hamfest.
- **John is storing the old 82 coax. More than 200' of 7/8" used for 30 years.**
Taylor - Any value if we take to Watson?
Plus old antenna. Maybe 18-20' tall.
Offer to club if anyone is interested.
- **Plasma TV (\$20 recycle fee Olmsted 33-60")**
Any desire from club? Take free.
Steve says we can deliver (20 mile radius).
- **Thanks to Peter W., W0LLN, for use of CW interface during Field Day**
- **Old D-Star repeater.**
More talking about what had failed. \$250, if usable as a repeater, for Steve to go with the Motorola repeater with EOC equipment for use with any tower.
Control board failed so no internet access for reflectors. Might work for D-Star to D-Star Simplex.



125 LIVE RADIO PROJECT

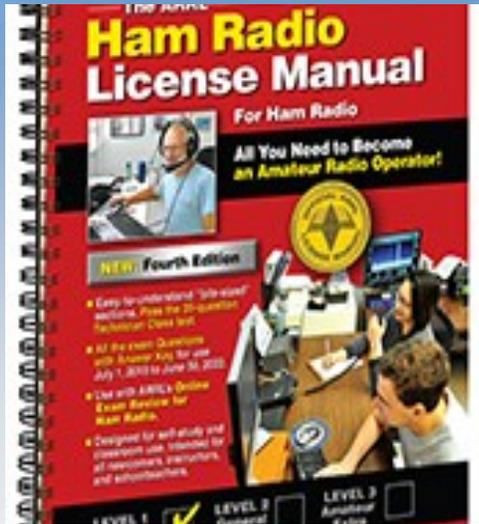


Steve Wiebke (W0STV) w0stv@yahoo.com

The 125Live ham station is ready and waiting to become operational. We have an extra monitor to go with the laptop computer that Colin/AA0CN will be updating the OS and add digital Ham radio programs. The TLC/Technical Learning Center room that the Ham station is located in is being transformed to a high-tech AARP senior computer learning center. The room will now be locked when not in use, because 15 new laptops are now stored and used in the room. The room was never locked before now. There are two locks to access the Ham radio station. Both are touch coded. This has the benefit of being more secured, allow privacy to operate, and will be better for scheduling our radio activities. We need to plan a date and time in advance for July with 125Live maintenance to access the roof and assemble the HF antenna. This can be done any day of the week during 125live business hours. The problem is how to organize it. Will discuss this at the July RARC meeting on July 11th.



EDUCATION



Dave (KØVH) dcnaatz@gmail.com

Bill (KØRGR) k0rgr@arrl.net

- **RARC is endorsing** the [Maple Grove \(MN\) Radio Club \(K0LTC\) online education program](#) working with Benton (K0BHJ). They are planning for Technician classes beginning February 6th, 2024, and have other license classes available at other times. Check the link above for more information.
- **RARC will also offer mentoring support** to any locals interested in getting their license. Please email [Dave \(KØVH\)](mailto:dcnaatz@gmail.com) or [Bill \(KØRGR\)](mailto:k0rgr@arrl.net) for more information.
- Check out the **YouTube videos for new license training** from [ARRL](#) and [Dave Casler \(KE0OG\)](#). There are a LOT of videos, and follow the ARRL License Manual for each class. <https://learn.arrl.org/courses/?pathPage=%2Farrl%2Fcourses>

73 **Dave Naatz** (KØVH)
Bill Osler (KØRGR)



JM ROCKET RADIO CLUB

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

As we are wrapping up summer break, the school radio club continues to be quiet. School starts for teachers on August 21st with Freshmen (9th graders) starting August 28th for orientation and induction to "High School" life. 6th graders and kindergartners have a similar day in their respective schools to help with the transition. The rest of the students start 29th with a long holiday weekend of Friday - Monday for Labor Day. Then the year is in full swing.

At the end of the school year, a staff member in charge of promoting school clubs and activities to the incoming classes had contacted me about having a table to promote the ham radio club. However, there has not been any further communication over the summer, so I don't know which day or week this will take place.

Opportunity for RARC Members to Volunteer:

When I know about the school club promotion day, I'll also find out if I can have volunteers come to promote radio. I'd be looking for a couple people to have a remote radio station set up and demonstrate radio contacts: one to make contact, one to describe action and answer questions. I'd also like someone to show fox hunting. (Students can stand in a circle with one holding the "fox" behind their back while another student in middle of circle tries to locate using a radio). Because this would be a quick introduction, it's superficial and fun.

Again, I don't know if it's indoors or outdoors, during school hours, lunches or after school hours. So information will be shared by the organizers around back to school time (hopefully) and I will need to act fast on it.

What to do NOW if you are interested in helping out at John Marshall throughout the school year:

All volunteers coming to John Marshall HS must complete the Rochester Volunteer forms at this site: [get-involved](#) Scroll to middle of page and click on blue button that says "Volunteer" to complete. This needs to be completed each school year, so if you volunteered before, please do this again.

I've been told there are some new freshmen coming to JM that have radio experience/interest. This excites me! The seniors that are still in my club expressed an interest in taking control / leadership in the club for this coming school year, which has been my hope. I do know that they are students involved in many activities, so I'm cautiously hopeful.



Parks On The Air® (POTA)

Mark (K0GMK) gmkelm@charter.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!





RARC BUY OR SELL



Icom ic-7410 HF/60 MHz Transceiver

160m-6m. Full power into dummy load. Comes with mic, DC power cord and printed user manual. It does not have either optional roofing filter. Cash only.

Rob (KE0PWN) rgolley2@hotmail.com Price: **\$650.00**



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



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

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.



RARC BUY OR SELL

MFJ-4602 Window Antenna Coax Feed-Thru



Contains three coax, one balanced line, one single wire and one ground feedthrus.

Only used one weekend. Width cut down to 35.5 inches. **Price: \$20**

Lynn (WB0U) (507) 358-8459

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.



- ♦ **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](#)?**

RARC has been an ARRL affiliated club for the past 50+ years. RARC wants all members to know about the benefit of being a member of the ARRL and how the ARRL promotes amateur radio and represents and supports Hams throughout the year.

Here are two links you can explore to see what the [ARRL](#) offers Hams. Take a look:

- ♦ **[ARRL Benefits](#)**
- ♦ **[The Value of ARRL Membership](#)**

