



# THE HAMSTER

**September 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](mailto:w0stv@yahoo.com)

**RARC paid for one table at the Riverland hamfest in Onalaska on August 5th to sell our equipment that had been donated to the club.** We ended up purchasing two more tables for club members to sell items. Riverland was glad to see us show up and asked if we would come back next year. I said we would. This is a Hamfest that needs to be supported for all SE Minnesota and West Central Wisconsin hams to attend.

**The August RARC picnic at the KOA Marion campground** was well attended by all ages and families. Thanks to the people that brought extra food for everyone to enjoy, Eric who helped with the cooking and the people who brought items to sell. Stan/AIOM and George/NOUM had their portable radio stations to show and tell for anyone interested. Another fun and well attended event. We have made reservations for 2024 at KOA again.

**125 Live has completed their HVAC installation.** It's time to schedule a time for the club to install antennas on the roof and attach the coax cables. We have waited a long time for this radio station to come to life for other Hams to use. Will arrange the set-up date at the next club meeting.

**The September RARC club has a program has been presented to hams around the country.** The information is intuitive and very educational for everyone from a new Technician to an Extra class Hams. Mark your calendars to not miss it.

**The RARC web site** has many links to other club information in the area along with links to Amateur Radio web sites and numerous items listed for sale. Take the time to check out [RARCHAMS.ORG](http://RARCHAMS.ORG) for the latest for sale items on QTH and to list your items you want to turn into cash. The most important link is how to sign up for our RARC groups.io email reflector. This is the most informative link for local hams to send and receive the latest information. You do not need to be an RARC member to sign up.

**Chester Woods** was very accommodating to us to hold our summer Field Day at their park. Even though we did not follow through due to potential weather. I plan to talk to the Chester Woods Director and see if we can rent one of the park cabins for our Winter Field Day in January to operate for 24 hours. With a big building and new location this may become our annual winter field day event. Will update the club at the next meeting.

Is there anyone that wants the club to do something they are interested in, let me know by sending an email to [w0stv@yahoo.com](mailto:w0stv@yahoo.com) with your idea. The more you know!



## RARC MEETING PROGRAMS

Taylor (WB0RSJ) - Vice President

**September 12th 2023 @ 6:30 PM**

**1st In The RATPAC Video**

# RARC Training Series

**"The 10 Worst Antennas" & Discussion**

We welcome and encourage members to present topics like contesting, Kit building, amateur radio software, etc., to the members at RARC monthly meetings. This is your opportunity to share your expertise and help other RARC members grow their Ham radio skills. Please contact any of the club leaders and let them know what topic you would like to present.



## September 2023 RARC ZOOM Online Login Info

**OPTIONAL FOR THOSE NOT ABLE TO ATTEND IN-PERSON**



Below is the ZOOM login information for the **September 12, 2023, 6:30 PM CDT RARC ZOOM** . The ZOOM login info is also posted via the [RARC email reflector](#) prior to the meeting.

- ◆ **When:** September 12, 2023 @ 06:30 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](mailto:w0stv@yahoo.com)  
Olmsted County ARES-EC

**Thanks for your time and effort to attend the Olmsted August ARES training meeting.** The more we train the less we will fail. **Our next ARES meeting will be a week early on September 9th at Fire Station #2 starting at 9:00 AM. The topic will be WinLink.** You will learn how WinLink works and will send computer VHF or HF radio email messages back and forth. You may bring your own station or use one of the supplied radio stations. We will be placing an order for ARES safety vests at this meeting. I will update information via groups.io later.

**John/KA0MYG spent a few days at Camp Ripley this month** communicating with state and public service agencies and Hams during an AUX-COMM drill on sending and receiving information when the grid is down. I could not go this year, but plan to have Olmsted ARES attend Camp Ripley next year.

John had an education and the reality of how things can and will go wrong or very slow in the real world when the *Fhit hits the San*. Talk to John and you will find it interesting and educational. Like any drill, Murphy was there with his law.

**We completed our last public service event for 2023.** Thanks everyone who took the time to help Ham radio make a difference.

WOW. how things have changed! I looked at the 2019 activity calendar and we had 10 public service events. In 2023 there were 3. This has happened nationwide. Will they return? Who knows!

If you know of an organization that could use our services tell one of the RARC officers and we will follow up with them for next year.

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



# ARES

## AMATEUR RADIO EMERGENCY SERVICE

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

**Olmsted ARES/Skywarn has a general emergency communications email account.** This is not a WinLink account. This is an email address that any Ham can send emergency information from their phone, computer or tablet to an ARES, EOC, or a SkyWarn control station to receive, reply to and/or forward documented information when radio traffic is too heavy or it is impossible to get the information out in time. Hams may check into the Olmsted ARES Sunday evening nets using this email. The address is [W0MXW@yahoo.com](mailto:W0MXW@yahoo.com). Keep it handy and remember to use it only for checking in with emergency ARES or SkyWarn information.

**All Yahoo email confirmation replies will be made using the Olmsted ARES WinLink email account starting in September.** This will then allow you to send WinLink emails to [W0MXW@winlink.org](mailto:W0MXW@winlink.org) without having your own WinLink account for 6 months from a WinLink account holder's last email to you.

**I know there are ARES radios out there that do not have the Minnesota ARES simplex VHF frequencies programmed in them.** If you need a list of the Minnesota ARES VHF frequencies please email me at [w0stv@yahoo.com](mailto:w0stv@yahoo.com) and I will forward a MS Word document to you.

**A YouTube WinLink application training video for you IOS (iPhone and iPad) users:**

[\(1\) RadioMail iOS Winlink App - 08/24/2023 - YouTube](#)

**Olmsted ARES Mission Statement:**

**To be so effective that you are able to help others.**



# HAMSTER HINTS

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

**One of my niche interests, within the hobby, is WWII-era equipment.** I especially like boxy cabinets, painted with a black, wrinkle-coat. W0VLZ mentioned to me that such paint--in rattle-can form--is still available at most local auto-parts stores. Ever since, I've saved-up these special painting projects for summertime, when I can throw a big piece of cardboard atop the picnic table, out back, and restore the finish on the cabinets and parts that I've prep'd during the winter months. Along the way, I've learned a few tricks for achieving a great, wrinkle finish...

First, of course, all loose paint, rust, and other contaminants *must* be removed. Perhaps most-importantly, the surface to be sprayed needs to be horizontal. This is helpful for *any* spray-painting (to avoid drips and runs), but it is especially true for wrinkle paints, because of the relatively thick coat required to achieve a good "wrinkle." Also, follow the directions on the can, closely. These include shaking the can very well, before--and between--applications of the paint. (When you are not spraying, be shaking! I have gotten near the end of a can, only to find the paint I've sprayed-on does not wrinkle much when it dries. I'm not sure, but this could be due to not shaking the can well-enough during the earlier applications.)



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# HAMSTER HINTS

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

**Once the piece has an even, "thickish" coat, I let it dry, undisturbed for a few hours.** Sunshine seems to help, too, but I usually cover the piece with a box, for the first phase of drying, to prevent dust, leaves, bugs, etc. from getting stuck in the wet paint and ruining the job.

Because of my horizontal requirement, I must paint most things "patiently," over the course of a few days or even weeks, to allow the upper surfaces to dry enough to then be turned downward so that the other surfaces may be painted.

Of course, careful masking of unpainted details is essential, too, before spraying. After spraying, be sure to clean the can's nozzle, by following the directions, else you'll probably be left with expensive paint inside a can that won't spray anymore.

Wipe any paint blobs from the nozzle, too, before recapping the can. I have experimented with a heat gun and a toaster oven to dry the paint faster, but I've settled on natural "air drying," under a protective cover, as my favorite method for producing a really nice wrinkle finish.

These pieces end up looking like new, since they don't tend to have any other finishes that are difficult to restore (e.g., the black, plastic knobs from this era generally clean up well with a careful scrubbing). ...One place where "wrinkles on the old" are desirable!



# CONTEST CORNER

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

**September has something for every contester no matter what your favorite mode.** It's also the kickoff month for the Minnesota Wireless Association (MWA) contest season and with the sunspots perking up the bands as never before you won't want to miss the action. You'll be able to confirm all of those summer antenna improvements. There are some great opportunities for the contest VHFers too! The fun starts with the All Asian DX SSB contest.

**September 2-3 JARL DX Contest SSB** The exchange is signal report and your age. See [rules](#) for exchange examples.

**September 9-11 ARRL VHF Contest** This contest includes all modes ie FM and digital. There are some [rule](#) revisions to check out.

**September 9-10 WAE DX contest SSB**, This is the phone version of Worked all Europe (WAE) CW event last month. There's a good chance that 10 meters will be hopping for this one. Unfortunately it may conflict with the VHF contest.

**September 23-24 CQWW RTTY Contest**, Don't wait until the last minute to either set up or check the settings for your RTTY and logging programs. The exchange is RST and a sequential serial number. There are several tutorials and getting started pages on the [rtty.contesting webpage](#). This is the first of the [MWA](#) qualifying contests.

If these aren't enough to keep you active in September there are at least 6 state QSO parties to help with your Worked All States awards.

You can see all the September activity and more on the [WA7BNM](#) calendar.

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## CONTEST CORNER

Many contesters use propagation tools like [VOACAP](#) (Voice of America Coverage Analysis Program) that can help improve scores in contesting by providing information about propagation conditions. Other online tools can be found [here](#). Some best practices to consider when using these tools include:

- **Know the program** Make sure you understand how to use the propagation tool you're using. Check out its features, options, and interface so you can make the most of it.
- **Put in the right information** GIGO applies here! Insure you enter accurate data, including the right frequencies, locations (both yours and the stations you want to contact), antenna types, and power levels.
- **Time Selection** Contests usually have specific time start/finish times. Use the propagation tool to analyze different time slots to figure out when the best propagation conditions are likely to occur between two given QTH's.
- **Frequency Selection** Depending on the specific contest and your goals, you might want to focus on different frequency bands. Propagation conditions vary across bands and times of day, so use the tool to identify the bands with the most favorable conditions. This is particularly true for September's events.
- **Antenna Selection** If your station has multiple antennas like wires, Yagis or verticals, use the tool to select which antenna is likely to yield the best results for specific paths and times.





## CONTEST CORNER

- **Path Analysis** Use the tool to analyze propagation conditions for specific paths you intend to use during the contest. This could include paths to specific countries or regions like Asia or Europe that you want to zero in on for the best score.
- **Multi-Path Analysis** In some cases, there might be multiple potential paths to the same location due to different propagation modes especially on VHF.
- **Real-Time Updates** Conditions can improve or deteriorate rapidly as we have seen this sunspot cycle. Continuously monitor the propagation tool to adapt your strategy based on real-time updates.
- **Contest Strategy** Focus on the paths and times that are most likely to yield successful contacts based on propagation predictions. For example, don't count on 40 meters to be open to Europe or Asia in the middle of the day.
- **Plan for surprises** Have backup plans in place for different paths and bands in case conditions don't match the predictions like if a CME (coronal mass ejection) occurs.
- **Experimentation:** Don't be afraid to experiment with different settings and paths during the contest. Sometimes, unexpected propagation conditions like long path to Oceania or Asia on 20 meters in the middle of the afternoon.
- **Combine with Experience** Experienced contesters often rely on a combination of tools, real-time observation, (polar flutter) and personal experience to make the best decisions.
- **Stay Informed** Check out updates or improvements in propagation tools. Newer versions might offer more accurate predictions or additional features that can enhance your contesting experience. Some [programs](#) may have subscription fees.

Keep in mind that while propagation tools can provide valuable guidance, contesting success also depends on factors like operator skill, station setup, and the behavior of other participants. Take advantage of these but be prepared to adapt and make quick decisions based on real-time conditions.

73 Fred (K4IU)



# TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

Eric (KF0S) - [kf0s@yahoo.com](mailto:kf0s@yahoo.com)

**There was no Technical Committee meeting in August because of the picnic.** However, I did get an email about some possible issues to look at on the 146.625 Fusion repeater, specifically the digital side. A few of us did do some testing at the picnic and it does seem that there could be some audio issues with that repeater, both analog and digital.

There was discussion that evening that in the past an unexpected reboot of the Fusion repeater computer could reset audio issues, so maybe it's something simple as some settings. At this point, I've requested a few times to get access to the Mayo Clinic site and have a list of items to do once we get access. I will push again to see about getting access and if there is some way to get more people access to the site so we aren't waiting so long.

At this point, we have a Gateway server for the DStar repeater and audio issues on the Fusion repeater to investigate.

**We plan to have a technical committee meeting before the September club meeting,** so we should have some more information on projects like 125Live available at the meeting.

If you have any issues you want to bring to the committee to discuss, feel free to send me an email at [kf0s@arrl.net](mailto:kf0s@arrl.net).



# 125LIVE RADIO PROJECT

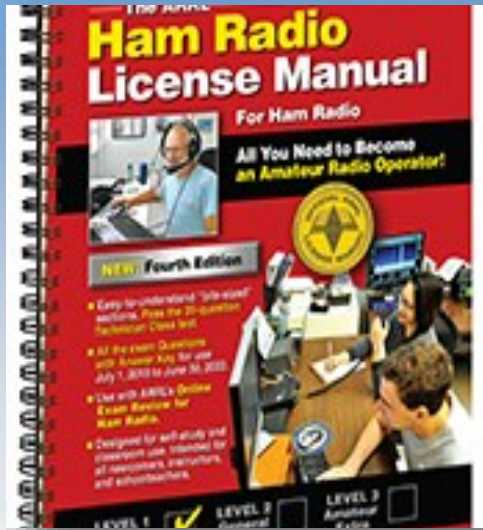


Steve Wiebke (W0STV) [w0stv@yahoo.com](mailto:w0stv@yahoo.com)

The 125Live ham station is ready and waiting to become operational. We have been notified that the HVAC project is completed and it is now time to plan for the installation of antennas and a connection of coax. 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. Now planning for activation of the station can commence and we will discuss this at the RARC meeting on September 12th.



# EDUCATION



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

Bill (KØRGR) [k0rgr@arrl.net](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto:red@bobdubke.com) (507) 398-5964



### 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**

*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](#)**

