

THE HAMSTER



November 2025

Official Monthly Publication of the Rochester Amateur Radio Club



We Need Volunteers!

See The Editor's Page (Page 3) for more details and his editorial opinion.



THE HAMSTER

2025 Rochester Amateur Radio Club Officers

President: Pat Hagge (KEOWWG)

Vice President: Dan Stroh (NOSPN)

Treasurer: George Hopkins (NOUM)

Secretary: Collin Howe (AA0CN)

Member-at-large: Steve Wiebke (W0STV)

Trustee: Steve Wiebke (W0STV)

The HAMSTER is the official monthly newsletter publication of the Rochester (MN) Amateur Radio Club (RARC). The HAMSTER is distributed monthly via the official RARC <u>groups.io</u> email free to members and non-members and is also available online in the club website: www.rarchams.org.

Rochester (MN) Amateur Radio Club was founded in 1932 and has been an ARRL (Amateur Radio Relay League) Affiliated club for 50+ years.

All members are invited to <u>contact the Hamster</u> with comments and/or questions. Additionally, members are encouraged to suggest or submit story ideas or content to the <u>HAMSTER</u> via the Editor's email link below.

The HAMSTER has an *outstanding* staff of regular contributors and you are invited to join the team!

G. Mark Kelm (K0GMK) - Editor

This Month In The Hamster

- ♦ **Table Of Contents** page 2
- ♦ The Editor Says... page 3
- ♦ RARC Volunteers Needed- pages 4
- ♦ RARC Training Program page 5
- ♦ ZOOM Online Meeting Login Info page 6
- ♦ Education page 7
- ♦ ARES & Community Service pages 8-9
- ♦ Contest Corner pages 10-11
- ♦ Hamster Hints pages 12-13
- ♦ Technical Committee pages 14-15
- ♦ RARC August Meeting Minutes pages 16-18
- ♦ ARRL Dakota Division pages 19-20
- ♦ ARRL Membership Info page 21
- ♦ RARC Wednesday Breakfast page 22
- ♦ Fall POTA page 23
- ♦ Local Ham Radio Nets page 24
- RARC Contact Info page 25



THE HAMSTER



As of the publishing (11-1-25) of this edition of the HAMSTER there are zero reported volunteers for the positions of RARC President and Vice President. It is evident to this editor that getting new volunteers for board positions and events is an exercise in frustration for the very few that are continually tapped to lead in virtually every capacity in RARC. I would like to remind you that when those few tire of this continuing situation that it will be a dark time for RARC.

If you are interested in the success of YOUR club then I suggest you step up and be counted. You don't have to be concerned with being left alone to learn as the current group of seasoned leaders will be there to help you. Election of RARC officers is set for the November 11th RARC meeting. To lend your help contact any of the members of the RARC board listed on page 2 of this HAMSTER or post an email on the RARC groups.io email reflector. Please help.

This month's RARC Training Program is brought to you by RARC VP Dan Stroh and is an adventure into the construction of portable antennas from "throw-away junk" that Dan says "sorta" work. It'll be fun and you will most likely come up with some antenna ideas from what "junk" you have stored in your garage or basement.

RARC monthly meetings take place at the Rochester Fire Station #2 in the EOC located at 2185 Whee-lock Dr. NE. The EOC is located behind the fire station on the lower level. There is ample parking adjacent to the entrance. We look forward to seeing you then!

That's all from me this month - enjoy another issue of an information packed HAMSTER.

73 Mark de KOGMK



Upcoming RARC Officer Elections



2026 RARC Officer Positions Open For You To Volunteer For:

- President
- Vice-President

This is your opportunity to contribute your leadership and ideas to the Rochester Amateur Radio Club. You don't have to have any experience as the club has a number of seasoned veteran leaders to help you along your path. Please consider volunteering and forward your name to any of the RARC board members listed on page 2 of this Hamster (click on their name to open an email window) to let them know that you want to ensure the continued success of the club. Please help.



RARC Training

Dan Stroh (NOSPN) - Vice-President

The November 11th RARC Training Program will be a presentation by VP Dan Stroh about portable antennas made from throw-away junk that work "sorta" most of the time...

"It'll Never Work!..."

Be sure to attend the program starting at 6:30 PM at the Rochester EOC preceding the regular monthly RARC meeting.



November 2025 RARC ZOOM Online

- Optional for those not able to attend in-person -



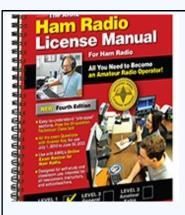
Below is the **ZOOM** login information for the November 11th 2025, 6:30 PM CDT RARC Meeting

Join Zoom Meeting (click on the link below):

https://us06web.zoom.us/j/9876548873?pwd=T0JBWEFzSCtBYzhiazA1NTdDb2Rkdz09

Meeting ID: 987 654 8873

• Passcode: : ######



Education

Dave (KØVH)

The first step needed to really get into Amateur Radio is to get your Amateur Radio License. This license is required in order to transmit on any of the Amateur Radio frequencies – however, listening does not. Listening is only part of the fun, so we encourage you to get your license so you can get the full experience!

Starting in February! Technician License Online Class

Watch this space in an upcoming Hamster for all the details!

Click on the ARRL link below to get information about getting your ham radio hobby started:



Getting Licensed - Step by Step



ARES

Amateur Radio Emergency Service

Olmsted ARES Mission Statement:

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

Here are dates to mark in your calendar:

- The November ARES meeting is on November 15th at Fire station #2 starting at 9:00 AM.
- The next area VE testing session is on November 13th starting at 6:30 pm at the Red Cross building at 305 Alliance Pl NE, Rochester, 55906
- The La Crosse NWS skywarn appreciation event is on December 6th from 8AM to 4PM the address

Please visit Northstar III Mn Communications Exercise 8/2025 Unofficial Trip Report for this year's Camp Ripley AUC-COMM report that Minnesota ARES groups attended.

In order to ensure that our members maintain an appropriate level of preparedness and to allow us to evaluate your skill levels, here are the minimum requirements which are summarized in this table:

REQUIREMENT for year 2026	PERIOD	THRESHOLD*
Basic ARES meetings and drills	Annually	66%
Weekly ARES Net Participation	Annually	75%
Digital Net Participation (voluntary)	Annually	50%
Online ARES email net check ins	Annually	50%
Public Service Event Participation	Annually	2 events

Continued On Next Page



ARES

Amateur Radio Emergency Service

Olmsted/Rochester ARES members are encouraged to participate in online training courses to get credentials that are acknowledged by government agencies:

Free FEMA Courses:

https://training.fema.gov/is/

- IS-100.c Introduction to the Incident Command System
- IS-200.c Basic Incident Command System for Initial Response
- IS-700.b An Introduction to the National Incident Management System
- IS-800.d National Response Framework

Steve Wiebke (WOSTV) - Olmsted/Rochester ARES EC

The more preparation, the less confusion



Contest Corner

Fred (K4IU)

November's contest schedule has a downside. That's because as we approach the holiday season the big contests compete for family time. So, the contester hams will have to stay on Santa's nice list by making sure they all have "kitchen passes" before committing to big contests. We have completed two of the sixteen (16) events for MWA season. The team assign-

ments and latest scores can be found on the <u>MWA website</u>. Here are the highlights for this month:

ARRL November Sweepstakes - CW

• **Dates:** November 1–3, 2025

• **Bands:** 160, 80, 40, 20, 15, 10 meters

• Focus: U.S. and Canadian stations exchange detailed info including serial number, power category, age and section.

• **Mode:** CW (Morse code)

WAE DX Contest - RTTY

• **Dates:** November 8–9, 2025

• Focus: Worldwide DX contest with European emphasis

• Mode: RTTY (Radioteletype)

Known for: QTC traffic exchange and high scoring potential. Not sure what a QTC is? Check out <u>this tutorial</u> for more information and how to implement in N1MM+

<u> ARRL November Sweepstakes – Phone</u>

• **Dates:** November 15–17, 2025

Bands: Same as CW version but no one is sending at 40 WPM

• Focus: Voice version of the CW Sweepstakes with identical exchange format

• **Mode:** SSB (Single Sideband voice)

CO Worldwide DX Contest - CW

• **Dates:** November 29–30, 2025

Focus: One of the largest global contests

• Mode: CW "59 04" signal report and our zone number"

• Goal: Work as many DX stations as possible across all continents



Contest Corner

Fred (K4IU)

Like last month these contests offer a mix of regional and global participation, and modes from CW to voice and RTTY. If you're new to contesting, the ARRL Sweepstakes is a great place to start—especially the Phone weekend.

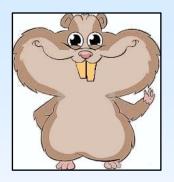
Check the WA7BNM calendar website for the dates and times for more operating events. The website offers historical and current data on contest schedules, log due dates, and participation trends. It's a go-to resource for contest planning and analysis.

Top 5 Beginner Questions About Ham Radio Contesting

- "What exactly is a ham radio contest?" A ham radio contest (also called radiosport) is a timed competition where operators try to make as many contacts as possible under specific rules—usually exchanging call signs, signal reports, and other info like location or serial numbers.
- "Do I need special equipment or a powerful station to participate?" Not at all! Many contests have categories for low-power (QRP) or simple stations. Even a basic setup with 100 watts and a wire antenna can be competitive, especially in local or digital contests.
- "How do I log contacts and submit my score?" Most contesters use logging software (like N1MM, N3FJP, or DXLog) to record contacts. After the contest, you submit your log (usually in Cabrillo format) to the contest sponsor's website for scoring.
- "What bands and modes are used in contests?" Contests are held on HF, VHF, UHF, and even microwave bands. Modes include CW (Morse code), SSB (voice), and digital (like FT8 or RTTY). Each contest has specific band/mode rules.
- test Calendar, or subscribe to newsletters like the ARRL Contest Update. These list upcoming contests, rules, and operating times.

"How do I find out when contests are happening?" You can check the ARRL Contest Calendar, WA7BNM Con-

73 Fred (K4IU)



Hamster Hints

Bob (KE0EXE)

I've made mistakes over the years, the worst leaving the most-lasting impressions—they should make a person wiser. However, in life, as we all know, plenty of things can "go wrong." My dad's sage advice, when I was growing up: "The best way to learn is from other people's mistakes!" This saying was repeated once in a while, maybe when a story was being told about some mishap that another person had experienced. My dad and mom probably shared such tales at the dinner table, and I, as a passive listener, learned a lot of things "the easy way.") ...But there is always plenty to learn the hard way, too! Fortunately, the lessons learned here were more humorous than harmful—your opportunity to learn the easy way! Here, now, is the rest of the tale of my recent, wooden—mast project...

The most important lesson I learned--and I'm still surprised that I learned it this *late* in life!--was this: **Don't paint contacting surfaces, if you want the interface to remain mobile!**

I did this. Then I let the paint dry for a few weeks, before bolting -together the two main sections that were supposed to pivot against each other, to make the hinge in my tilt-down mast. By letting the paint dry "that well," I though I was out-smarting the paint. It was a somewhat-correct idea, but the paint had another idea. It decided it could still double as very good glue, even when "dry." After a few days of being bolted together, I truly had a one-piece tower, instead of a two-piece. It was a very long tower, too (\sim 36'), which made it unwieldy to erect (though my team and I were successful--see last-month's article).





Hamster Hints

Bob (KE0EXE)

A second lesson: **Don't put a tilt-down tower in a spot where it can't tilt-down!**

Now, you are witnesses that I really should have already learned this lesson (see Hamster Hints, from July, 2025)--I seemed to know it a few months ago! Well, anyway, after the damage was already done, I didn't think it mattered much, since my mast ended up being a "one-piece," anyway--or did it matter?! ...That tree created unnecessary difficulties, when tipping-up the long mast and setting it into the hole, because we had to maneuver the whole mast at a weird, compound angle, to clear the tree's branches. ...Conversely, the branches supported the mast nicely, midway-up, to allow the team to take a short rest before the final lift. Anyway, the tree is leaning towards the house, so I might cut it down before I ever remove the mast. Thus, eventually, maybe I can still have my tilt-down mast......if I could only fix the paint-glue problem...

In fact, I did fix the paint-glue problem! One ambitious day, after the mast was up and functional, I spent most of an afternoon out there in the backyard, in the hot sun, with a sawzall, slicing-apart the three bonded pieces, by making two long rip-cuts. That took quite a while, because I had to keep partly-removing and then reinstalling the two large, hinge-pin bolts, to prevent the tower from falling, as I ripped past the four locations where the bolts crossed my cut-lines, inside the beams.

Because this bolt issue was slowing me down a lot, I took a short-cut which I should not have taken. I violated a lesson I learned long ago: When making a blind cut through a thick piece of wood, with a sawzall, stop and check the other side of the wood often, to make sure the blade is still following the intended path, on the other side.

Well, I was working on a step ladder, and it was inconvenient to stop frequently, climb down, move the ladder to the other side, climb up again, and then saw a little more from that side--all this done to try to keep the cut-line *going straight*. (The technique is to angle the saw blade "up," to point "into" the already-made cut on the other side, so it will tend to follow the existing cut instead of following some random grain-pattern in the uncut wood.) Thus, in about four places, my blade veered off the intended path a bit, before I noticed it. This was not serious, but it made one of my two cuts uglier than it needed to be, and that required a little extra [careful!] glueing--er, I mean *painting*--to hide the mistakes again. (;-)

Ultimately, it all worked, and I now have a functional, hinged, tilt-down mast--to be exercised *someday*, after the tree is gone!

LESSONS NOW LEARNED!

RARC TECH COMMITTEE

Eric - KF0S

Tech Committee - 10/13/25

Attendees: Eric, Pat, Taylor, George

Post meeting and RARC meeting comments in italics

Mayo

• Fusion Repeater

- Both analog and digital are down. Pat remotely accessed the Fusion PC and it seemed normal but had no access to
 the repeater. Darrel was able to get onsite, and determined the repeater was blank, and power cycling the repeater led to a Yaesu screen. Found WiresX app as off, restarted the PC and the internet linking kit (HRI-200) and
 things came back. Verified that analog and digital are now working.
- The belief is that once we get the Creston 300 hooked up, we should have been able to get things restarted remotely.

DStar repeater

- Pat has changed the Gateway server to use non-ICOM Gateway Server to allow additional reflectors and better ease of use for joining reflectors as well as the web interface.
- This has some issues Pat is working on with the software developers.
- The registration server is temporarily(?) disabled as it's not part of the new software.
- Currently, the Gateway Server is not responding after a power management update. Analog repeater is still functional.
- Darrel removed the DStar PC when at the site (he was unable to log into it (thought was to revert the prior change locally), and delivered it to Pat.
- Creston 200 received and will be hooked up when we can get on-site for an extended period of time, hopefully when we return the Gateway Server.
- Taylor is continuing his effort to get access to the site, so we have at least one other person. Mark may be able to follow in Taylor's path once established.

RARC TECH COMMITTEE

Eric - KF0S

Rochester EOC

- Steve got a CO monitor for the trailer.
- Steve got a new toner cartridge for the printer.

Club hardware sales

• We still have (mostly at Pat's) the old 146.625 repeater plus its predecessor, a SB-221 HF amplifier, a military tower, 2 Mosley beams, as well as an Icom 718.

• ARRL Club Insurance is coming due.

- Pat worked with George on getting the list updated with new radios, etc.
- George has numbers on the cost for insurance next year. \$328.72 for the next year.



RARC MEETING MINUTES

Collin (AAOCN) - RARC Secretary

Meeting Minutes, October 2025

Program: Frank Howell K4FMH on Antennas
Drawing... W0STV won and donated back!
Introductions + What got you into Ham Radio
Nets + Announcements: See website for details!

ARES meeting this Saturday Oct 18th

Treasurer's report:

Checking:

Opening Balance: \$1,068.68

Credits:

Dues: \$60.00

PayPal Dues: \$220.00 Equipment Sold: Raffle: \$24.00

Donation:

Misc:

Debits: RPU \$42.83

Meeting Food

PayPal Charges \$7.83

Field Day: Picnic

Equipment CO detector \$20.64

Tower Lease

Insurance

Web domain

Postage

Misc. Toner \$51.89

Misc. Trash disposal \$10.00

Total: \$1,239.49

Savings:

Opening Balance \$9,826.94



RARC MEETING MINUTES

Collin (AAOCN) - RARC Secretary

Meeting Minutes, September 2025

Credits:

Interest: \$0.39

Closing Balance: \$9,827.76

Total: \$11,067.25

CD Matures January 2026: \$4,000.00 **CD Matures January 2026:** \$4,705.29

Technical Committee KF0S:

4 attendees:

- Fusion repeater down. Restarts got it working again.
- DSTAR repeater switch is ready to install. Gateway PC is down.
- New toner for EOC printer
- Stuff sale: Not much moved, 718 spoken for
- Insurance is coming due. Final tally is \$328.72.
- Some hash perhaps on Roch255 detected

Contesting K4IU: See Newsletter! 25th Oct CQWW DX Phone contest

Jamboree On The Air this weekend (Scouting, Gamehaven 10AM-2PM this Saturday Oct 18th)

Education: KOVH – General class from Maple Grove, starting Technician soon.

John Marshal Radio Club: AA3ME – Posted in Groups IO, last Saturday was club roundup. Danny Stroh did POTA style activation. Discussing JM Gives December events. Looking for volunteers to come to the club and demonstrate radios! Working on Soldering. 3:30pm-4:50PM.

ARES / Public Service / 125Live: Steve W0STV:

- ARES this Saturday Oct 18th, bring HTs and Go Kits (Field Units training/exercise), 9AM
- VE test on November 13th, 6:30PM AT American Red Cross building by RPU / Foster Arend park

Old Business:

- Already discussed

New Business

- Annual renewal of business name registration with the state.
- Field Day 2026: Mayoral Proclamation needs to be done by February. Looking for coordinator(s)!



RARC MEETING MINUTES

Collin (AAOCN) - RARC Secretary

Meeting Minutes, September 2025

- -Monthly meetings on Zoom.
- -Proposal: There is a MN Amateur Radio Consortium. All radio clubs in MN. Need one delegate from the club to join. Proposal is to join and donate. W0STV offers to be delegate, needs alternate. Presently not taking donations (no expenses). W0STV to follow up, tentatively joining. Motion to tentatively join passes.
- Looking for President / VP for this upcoming year
- Discussing Christmas Party locations
- Winter Field Day? Last Saturday in January 24 & 25, 2026



Happenings In The Dakota Division

Bill Lippert (ACOW) ARRL Dakota Division Director

ARRL Launches Nationwide Grassroots Campaign to Pass Amateur Radio Emergency Preparedness Act

On September 18, the ARRL sent a Bulletin to the members asking for their help in getting the **Amateur Radio Emergency Preparedness Act** passed. Any FCC licensed amateur radio operator can help, not just ARRL members. Please share this with your friends and at your club meetings. To help it only takes a minute of your time.

The help we need is to send a letter to your representative and senators using the online app at www.arrl.org/hoa. Click the "SEND YOUR LETTERS NOW" button, on the next page enter you call sign, verify your information and then click "SEND MY LETTERS". Three letters from you will be sent to ARRL Lobbyist for hand delivery to your representative and senators.

www.arrl.org/hoa has more information about the bills and process. Also on the page is an FAQ to help explain why you should do this.

If you haven't already sent your letters, take the time to do so now, only takes about a minute.

Thank you for your help and support.

73 Bill Lippert AC0W ARRL Director



Happenings In The Dakota Division

Bill Lippert (ACOW) ARRL Dakota Division Director

Division elected leaders:

Director: Bill Lippert, ACOW acOw@arrl.org

Vice Director: Lynn Nelson, W0ND w0nd@arrl.org

MN Section Manager: Bill Mitchell, AE0EE ae0ee@arrl.org
ND Section Manager: Ralph Fettig, NORDF fettigrd@gmail.com
SD Section Manager: Chris Stallkamp, KIOD ki0d@arrl.org

SPECIAL OPERATING EVENTS:

11/8-11/10 - 1600Z - 2355Z; Remembering the Edmund Fitzgerald; W0JH

3.860 7.260 14.260 21.360

Stillwater Amateur Radio Association; radioham.org

Full details ARRL Special Events listing

www.arrl.org/special-event-stations search: Minnesota



- Are you a member of the <u>ARRL</u>?
 - Are you new to Ham Radio?
- Have you been licensed for a while but not active?
 - Are you active but never explored the <u>ARRL</u>?

RARC has been an ARRL affiliated club for the past 50+ years. RARC wants all members to know about the benefits 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



Wednesday Morning RARC Ham Radio Gathering







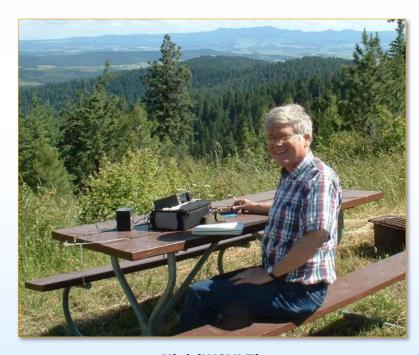


- Wednesdays at 9:00 AM (1400 Zulu)
- New! Rooster's (North Location) 2280 Superior Drive NW



Parks On The Air ® (POTA)

It's FALL POTA Time!



Niel (W0VLZ)

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 <u>Parks On The Air</u> website, view the <u>FAQ page</u>, the <u>Help/Getting Started</u> section and perhaps view some of the getting started <u>videos</u> by seasoned PO-TA operators. If you are interested in becoming an Activator fill out the <u>sign-up</u> to become a member and get started.

Do you know that there is a **POTA** entity in Rochester?



Weekly Nets

- Monday 8 p.m. RARC 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.
- Wednesday 7 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 <u>FLDIGI</u> and the rest of the <u>NBEMS</u> 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



Contact RARC

RARC meets the second Tuesday of each month at 6:30 PM (except the August meeting is the Annual RARC Picnic and January is the annual holiday party) in the lower level of Rochester Fire Station #2 in the EOC at 2185 Wheelock Drive NE, Rochester, MN

• Website: http://www.rarchams.org/

◆ Snail Mail: RARC , P.O. Box 1, Rochester, MN 55903

• Groups.io: Register to post and receive RARC official email, notices and the Hamster

♦ 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

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 emailing. Click this <u>register</u> link 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 RARC.

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