



THE HAMSTER



October 2025

Official Monthly Publication of the *Rochester Amateur Radio Club*

Experiments In Portable HF Antennas

See Page 5 For The Details!



THE HAMSTER

2025 Rochester Amateur Radio Club Officers

President: [Pat Hagge](#) (KEOWWG)

Vice President: [Dan Stroh](#) (N0SPN)

Treasurer: [George Hopkins](#) (N0UM)

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 groups.io 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 [contact the Hamster](#) with comments and/or questions. Additionally, members are encouraged to suggest or submit story ideas or content to the HAMSTER 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

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THE HAMSTER



The Editor Says...

G. Mark Kelm (K0GMK)

*Election of **RARC** officers is set for November and this is your opportunity to add your skills to the leadership and direction of our club. 2026 openings include President and Vice-President. Please see page 4 for details about how you can get involved.*

*Another great month of content in the HAMSTER for October includes the **ARRL Dakota Division Happenings** by Bill (AC0W and another excellent **Hamster Hints** this month by Bob (KE0EXE) - contributors that anchor each month's issues with locally generated content and don't miss the **ARES** and **Community Service** reports by Steve (W0STV) to keep up to date with the wide range of training and ham related activities available.*

*This month's **RARC Training Program** is brought to you by **Professor Emeritus Dr. Frank M. Howell, PhD (K4MFH)** speaking about **Experiments In Portable HF Antennas**. With interest high about operating portable for POTA, SOTA and IOTA his presentation will present valuable information regarding deploying the most efficient portable HF antenna to make your remote ham radio operating experience as fun and successful as possible. As always the RARC Training Programs begins at 1830 CDT kicking off the regular monthly RARC meeting on October 14th, 2025. **RARC monthly meetings take place at the Rochester Fire Station #2 in the EOC located at 2185 Wheelock 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!***

*For you ham radio contesters October kicks off the fall contest season and Fred's (K4IU) **Contest Corner** this month has a wealth of information regarding contesting and contesting with a basic 100 watt station.*

That's all from me this month - enjoy another issue of an information packed HAMSTER. 73



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. Thank you!



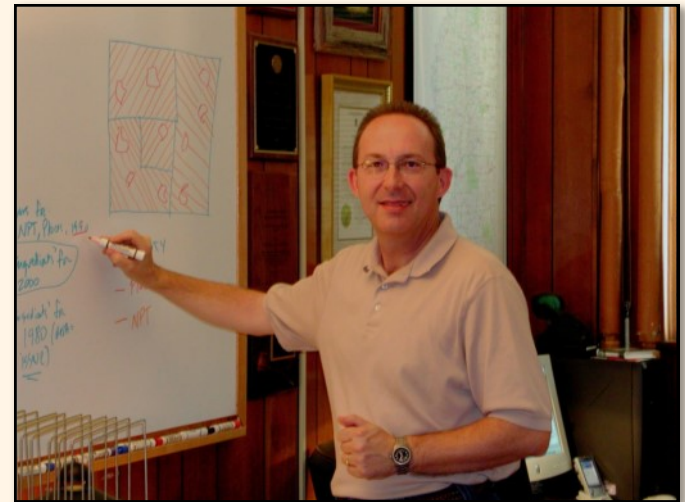
RARC Training

Dan Stroh (N0SPN) - Vice-President

The October 14th **RARC Training Program** will be a presentation by **Professor Emeritus Dr. Frank M. Howell, PhD (K4MFH)**

Link To View Dr. Howell's [Web Page](#)

Experiments In Portable HF Antennas



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



October 2025 RARC ZOOM Online Login

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



Below is the ZOOM login information for the October 14th 2025, 6:30 PM CDT RARC Meeting

♦ Join Zoom Meeting (click on the link below):

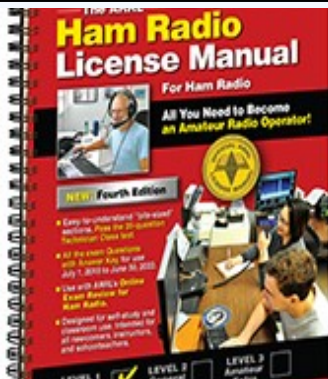
<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/9876548873?pwd=T0JBWEFzSCtBYzhiazA1NTdDb2Rkdz09>

♦ Meeting ID: 987 654 8873

♦ Passcode: : #####

♦ For audio only from a mobile phone:

Call: (312) 626-6799 US (Chicago) 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 Soon! General License Online Class

10/8/2025 – General License Class provided by **K0LTC Maple Grove Radio Club**
- Online via **ZOOM**

- Wednesday's: 6:45 PM – 9:15 PM, 11-12 weeks online
- Contact: registrar@mnyarc.org to register

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.

The last public service event for 2025 was on September 20th. That does not mean we have nothing more to do. The Rochester EOC had to postpone their tabletop disaster drill for October to late November or possibly December. Olmsted/Rochester ARES will continue to train monthly to be able to satisfy the needs of the Rochester and Olmsted EOC's.

Our next ARES meeting is on October 18th starting at 9:00 AM at the Rochester EOC located at Fire Station #2.

Please review these resources to help you to train and prepare:

ARES® Resources

- [Download the ARES Manual \[PDF\]](#)
- [ARES Field Resources Manual \[PDF\]](#)
- [ARES Standardized Training Plan Task Book \[Fillable PDF\]](#)
- [ARES Standardized Training Plan Task Book \[Word\]](#)
- [ARES Plan](#)
- [ARES Group Registration](#)
- [Emergency Communications Training](#)

Continued On Next Page



ARES

Amateur Radio Emergency Service

I would encourage anyone interested in any facet of amateur radio to consider attending the Minnesota ARRL State Convention on October 11th starting at 8:00 AM and running to 5:00 PM. There are over 24 seminars being given throughout the day. I am sure you will find one or more of these sessions that would be of interest to you.

Included in the conference is a hamfest section. This section has expanded over the years when the conference first came back to Minnesota. Below is the link for all the information for you to decide to attend. For the people that remember the old Minnesota hamfest in the 20th Century.

This is becoming a revival of that era.

Click this link to go to the convention website: northstarradio.org

The more you know!

Steve Wiebke (W0STV) - Olmsted/Rochester ARES EC

The more preparation, the less confusion



October is packed with exciting opportunities to get on the air and test your skills and check out those summer antenna improvements! There is something for everyone whether you love SSB, RTTY or CW. Happy contesting!

Checkout for the dates and times of these operating events and more in October. You can see everything on the [WA7BNM calendar website](#)

- A 100-watt HF transceiver (like an Icom IC-7300, Yaesu FT-891, or similar)
- A basic antenna (dipole, vertical, end-fed wire, or even a magnetic loop)
- Logging software ([N1MM Logger+](#) is free and widely used)
- A computer or tablet for logging and spotting

Contest Corner

Fred (K4IU)



Choosing the Right Contest

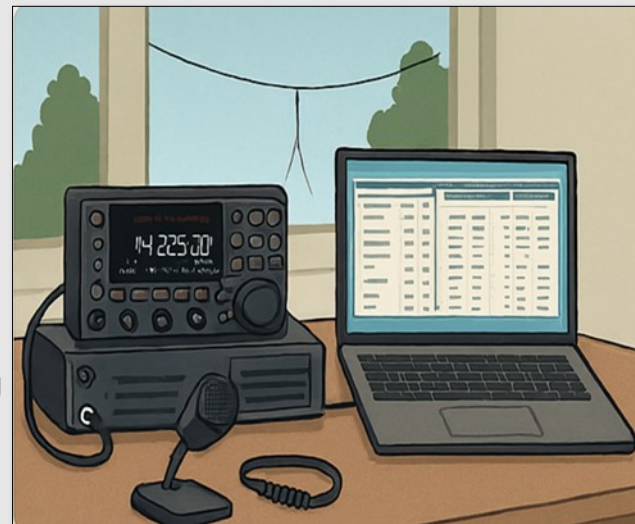
Start with beginner-friendly contests:

- State QSO Parties ([California QSO Party](#) noted above is a great start)
- [CQ World Wide DX Contest \(SSB\)](#)
- North America QSO parties ([NAQP](#))
- [Straight Key Night](#) (for CW operators)

These events are less competitive and more welcoming to new operators.

Tips for Making the Most of Your Modest Setup

- **Focus on Strategy**, Not Power Use “search and pounce” to find strong stations and work them efficiently. You don’t need to call CQ all day—just make solid contacts.
- **Know Your Propagation** Use online tools like [VOACAP](#) or [DXMaps](#) to see which bands are open and where your signal might reach.
- **Use the Right Logging Software** N1MM Logger+ is free and supports most contests. It helps track multipliers, scores, and even sends your log automatically.
- **Practice Good Operating Etiquette** Listen before transmitting, give full exchanges, and be courteous. Contesting is fast-paced, but good manners still matter.
- **Set Personal Goals** Instead of trying to win, aim to beat your own score, work a new state, or try a new mode like RTTY or FT8.



Contest Corner

Fred (K4IU)



Real-World Success Stories

Many operators have earned awards like Worked All States or DXCC using nothing more than a wire in the trees and a 100-watt rig. Your station may be modest, but your results can be mighty.

Final Thoughts

Contesting with a simple station is not only possible—it's fun, educational, and a great way to improve your operating skills. Whether you're a new ham or just new to contesting, give it a try. You might be surprised how far your signal and your enthusiasm can go.

73 CU Next Month

Fred K4IU



Hamster Hints

Bob (KE0EXE)

I was puzzling over how to set a horizontal, 36-foot-long, heavy, wooden mast assembly into a 4'-deep hole, to put the mast vertical—without renting a crane!

I still had not solved this problem completely, even on the day it would happen. I had lined up a team of helpers to tip-up the mast, but I was worried about damaging the sides of the hole when the lower two 4x4's slid down into it at a severe angle. Then, on a fortuitous chance visit to my QTH, earlier that same evening, KE0SHQ suggested a solution...

"I have a piece of heavy plastic that I put inside a leaf bag to hold its shape while I fill it with leaves," he began our brainstorming. I responded, "Yes, I have one of those, too..."—but neither of us wanted to sacrifice our coveted leaf bag holders to such a self-destructive cause. Then someone suggested using a board, instead. I was thinking I didn't have such a board (probably plywood) that was both thin enough and yet strong enough to "buffer the hole," on the one side where it would need to be placed as a sliding surface. My friend suggested that even 1/8"-thick material—if it was the right toughness—would be thick enough to provide an adequate receiving surface, to guide the ends of the posts down into the hole's bottom.

He had to be going, then, so we said our goodnights, then I checked in my workshop. Lo-and-behold!, there I found the perfect scrap of 1/8"-thick hardboard, left over from building my custom ham shack desk-top, quite a few years ago. I trimmed it to roughly 1' x 4', and placed it into the hole, going down along the far side—perfect! On the "close" side of the hole, I used another scrap: a triangular-shaped piece of the same material. Its 90-degree corner was pointed down into the hole, and its hypotenuse, opposite, was too long to allow it to fall down into the hole. It seemed a good idea, to protect that other side of the hole from damage, by preventing dirt from being dragged down into the hole as the mast was slid in—another perfect solution! (Unfortunately, I did not snap any photos of these antics as they happened, later that evening.)

- Continued on next page -



Hamster Hints

Bob (KE0EXE)

Well, in the end, my yoke of two, strong, young men—who did the brunt of the lifting—was entirely adequate to pretty much lift the whole mast and gently lower it (once completely vertical) into the hole. However, the hardboard implements definitely provided protective barriers while tilting-up the mast (which was the real feat), as the two post-ends engaged, and were captured in, the mouth of the hole.

Once lowered, we held it plumb, packed-in the dirt, and adjusted the two guy-ropes and the antenna rope. The whole raising was done in 30 minutes, and that was the best part of this whole project! (I shall relate more, later, about the many other things that went wrong with this project, at other times, but, for now, let's all savor the moment: another stealthy, long-wire antenna is up in the air, in a non-HOA neighborhood!)

- Project photos on the following 2 pages -



Hamster Hints

Bob (KE0EXE)



The "tilt-down" mast, all "stuck-together." Lesson: PAINTED surfaces = GLUED surfaces!



Hamster Hints

Bob (KE0EXE)



The one-piece, "no-longer-a-tilt-down" mast is finally set! The red rope eventually supported the antenna wire (instead of acting as a guy-rope).

RARC TECH COMMITTEE

Eric - KF0S

Tech Committee Meeting - 9/8/25

Attendees: Eric, Mark, George, John D., Pat H, Dave N.

Post meeting and RARC meeting comments in italics

- **Mayo**
- Pat and Eric met with Darrell and got the D-STAR repeater working with the Gateway Server.
- Main issue was the repeater needing a setting updated to signify there was a Gateway Server and then reverting the IP address changes.
- Pat has changed the Gateway server to use non-ICOM Gateway Server to allow additional reflectors.
- This has some issues Pat is working on the new software developers with.
- This also disabled the registration server.
- Right now, the Gateway Server is not responding after Pat made a power management update. Do we need to get site access?
- Remote KVMs are being investigated by Pat.
- Back to prior discussion on remote power operation of repeater and computer. We have a Crestron 300 on the Fusion repeater, could order another Crestron 200 for the D-STAR.
- *Club approved a purchase.*
- **We need to make some new Information Sheets (License and contact info) and post at the various sites.**
- **Board members/Tech committee**
- **Data sharing process should be developed.**
- Google Drive. Share with appropriate people.
- Pat has a start on some process docs (like adding newsletter to website, etc.)
- **Rochester EOC**
- Should get CO monitor for the trailer.
- *Steve to check manufacturer date on detector in trailer.*
- New HF radio setups received and stored at City EOC. Also have the new beam and rotor in storage locker.
- **Club hardware sales**
- Last was at August picnic.
- 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 the Icom 718.
- **Insurance coming due. Cover new radios, and remove old.**
- *Pat working with George.*



RARC MEETING MINUTES

Collin (AA0CN) - RARC Secretary

Meeting Minutes, September 2025

Steve W0STV presentation on Meshtastic

Raffle, \$24 winnings for Vince

Announcements, see Hamster.

Committee reports: If you have a presentation contact Pat or Dan.

Treasurer's report: George N0UM

Checking:

Opening Balance: \$5,265.60

Credits:

Dues:

PayPal Dues:

Equipment Sold:

Raffle:

Donation: United Way \$130.00

Misc:

Debits:

RPU \$43.60

Meeting Food \$23.97

PayPal Charges

Field Day: Food \$75.94

Picnic Food \$613.61

Equipment Antenna & Rotor \$1,050.00

Equipment 2 Radios & accessories \$2,519.80

Tower Lease

Insurance

Web domain

Postage

Misc.

Total: \$1,068.68



RARC MEETING MINUTES

Collin (AA0CN) - RARC Secretary

Meeting Minutes, September 2025

Savings:

Opening Balance \$9,826.94

Credits:

Interest: \$0.43

Closing Balance: \$9,827.37

Total: \$10,896.05

CD Matures January 2026 \$4,705.29

CD Matures March 15, 2025, 4.40% \$4,347.36

ARES: Meeting this Saturday at 9AM

Tech Committee: KF0S

(Two months covered)

DSTAR Repeater configured at Mayo + Gateway server, continuing work for reflector/gateway. Local works.

Considering remote KVM/Power options. Updating Info sheets for all repeater locations.

Two new Yaesu HF radios and beam+rotor are now received!

Club HW sales: Most were sold at picnic, some equipment (old 625 repeater, military mast, beams, Icom718, SB221 KW amp, etc.)

Contesting: This week VHF contest.

CQWW RTTY on Sept27-29th.

Hamster has the dates!

John Marshall RC: AA3ME

Today was first radio club, 5-6 students. Taylor donated a radio.

At Rochester John Marshall October 4th 4pm-7pm Fall Festival, lots of food, etc.

Request: HF-POTA style event for this event from the RARC club. Looking for volunteers from RARC!

Look for volunteer links on Groups.io. Meetings are usually on Tuesdays 3:40-4:40pm

Steve W0STV ARES:

This weekend ARES meeting for the month. Crossband repeating discussion, Q&A, etc.

One more public service event, Ride the Ridges event 100mi distance race, September 20th.



RARC MEETING MINUTES

Collin (AA0CN) - RARC Secretary

Meeting Minutes, September 2025

125Live!:

Antenna needs work; goal is before winter.

Checking trailer CO detector

Antenna + Rotor is in storage locker (County EOC is being remodeled, trailers are at new location)

Education: Maple Grove Radio Club to have general class in October on Zoom; Watch Hamster for information

Old Business:

Antenna + Radios + Rotors purchased last month.

New Business:

718 off, new radios on the insurance.

Mayo repeater, remote power; Crestron PC300 (individual outlet switching) could be hooked up to ethernet and repeater.

Another like it (similar functionality) PC200 (all or none). ~\$90 on eBay + <\$20 S/H, tested., Pat proposed, K0VH seconded, passes.

Meeting adjourned 8:38pm



Happenings In The Dakota Division

Bill Lippert (AC0W) ARRL Dakota Division Director

Busy weekend for hamfests in the Division, one in South Dakota and three in Minnesota. Your Section Managers and the Division Director will be at three of the four. Then in two weeks there is the ARRL Dakota Division Convention at a new home in Moorhead. Two weeks after that is the ARRL Minnesota State Convention in Brooklyn Park. The ARRL Minnesota State Convention has some new things to offer this year so check out their website. Links are below.

With fall, licensing classes are starting up links are listed below.

That's it for this time. Looking forward to see some of you at one of the hamfests.

73

Bill Lippert AC0W
ARRL Director
Dakota Division
ac0w@arrl.org

Division elected leaders:

Director Bill Lippert, AC0W ac0w@arrl.org
Vice Director Lynn Nelson, W0ND w0nd@arrl.org

MN Section Manager Bill Mitchell, AE0EE ae0ee@arrl.org
ND Section Manager Ralph Fettig, N0RDF fettigrd@gmail.com
SD Section Manager Chris Stallkamp, KI0D ki0d@arrl.org



Happenings In The Dakota Division

Bill Lippert (AC0W) ARRL Dakota Division Director

LICENSING CLASSES

10/8/2025 – General License Class

Maple Grove Radio Club

Online via Zoom

Wednesday 6:45 PM – 9:15 PM, 11-12 weeks online

Contact: registrar@mnyarc.org to register

Special Operating Event

11/8-11/10 – 1600Z – 2355Z; **Remembering the Edmund Fitzgerald**; W0JH
3.860 7.260 14.26 0 21.360

Stillwater Amateur Radio Association; radioham.org

Full details ARRL Special Events listing

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

ARRL Minnesota State Convention

10/11 – Brooklyn Park, MN; 8:00 AM – 4:00 PM

ARRL Minnesota State Convention

North Star Radio Convention

Minnesota Amateur Radio Consortium

Hennepin Technical College

9000 Brooklyn Blvd

Brooklyn Park, MN

<https://northstarradio.org/>

www.arrl.org/hamfests/north-star-radio-convention-arrl-minnesota-state-convention-1



Happenings In The Dakota Division

Bill Lippert (AC0W) ARRL Dakota Division Director

VE - North Dakota

10/4 – 10:15 AM Minot, ND; contact: newdesignsbbs@hotmail.com ; must preregister

1949 North Broadway, Minot ND

www.arrl.org/exam_sessions/minot-nd-58703-529



- 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](#)?

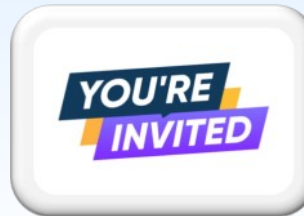
RARC has been an [ARRL](#) affiliated club for the past 50+ years. RARC wants all members to know about the benefits of being a member of the ARRL and how the [ARRL](#) promotes amateur radio and represents and supports Hams throughout the year.

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)

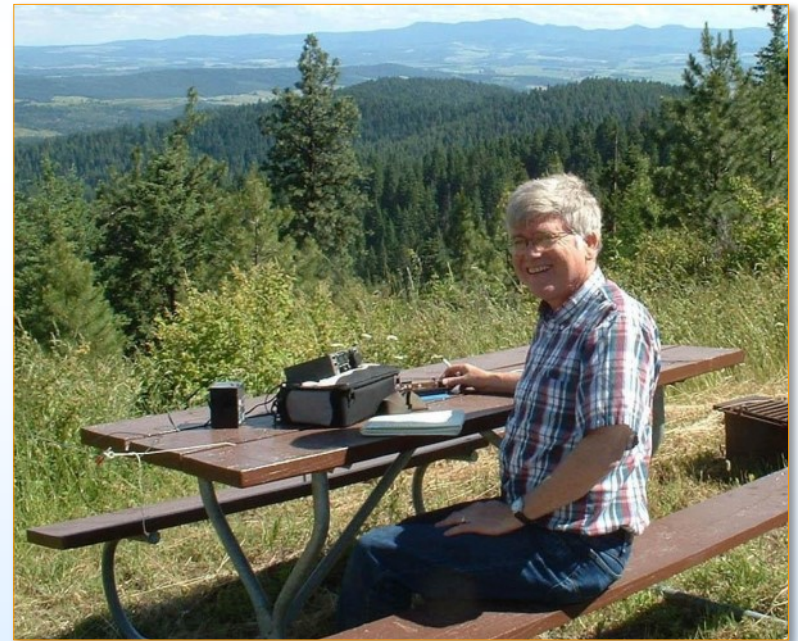
It's **FALL** POTA Time!

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.

Do you know that there is a [POTA entity in Rochester](#)?



Niel (W0VLZ)



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 [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



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 [register](#) 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