

May 2026



# THE HAMSTER



*Official Monthly Publication Of The Rochester (MN) Amateur Radio Club*

**Field Day 2026 is June 27-28 2026**

**RARC Field Day Planning At The May 14th Club Meeting**



# AMATEUR RADIO

# FD ★ 26

## A NATIONAL RESOURCE



# THE HAMSTER

## 2026 Rochester Amateur Radio Club Officers

**President:** [Jared Pfaffenbach](#) - KEØPGS  
**Vice President:** Vacant  
**Treasurer:** [George Hopkins](#) - NØUM  
**Secretary:** [Collin Howe](#) - AAØCN  
**Member At Large:** [Steve Wiebke](#) - WØSTV  
**Trustee:** [Steve Wiebke](#) - WØSTV

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 reflector 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, photos 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](#) (KØGMK) - Editor

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## **RARC President's Message**

**Well, spring has sprung and there's a lot going on.** From lawn care, to sports, antenna projects, home improvements, etc., and just life in general. There is no shortage of things to spend your time on. Here's a list of upcoming events you should consider spending your time on:

- **POTA - Sunday May 3, 1PM, at the Douglas Trail head in Douglas, MN** Dan - N0SPN will be putting on a POTA demonstration and participation event. If you have radios or antennas you want to use, bring them. Dan will have two HF rigs w/ power supplies, along with two 20M and a multi band (10,15,20,40M) antennas.
- **Tuesday May 12 we will have our regular RARC monthly club meeting, 6:30pm** at Fire Station 2 in the EOC room. This month's topic will be about programming your radio, presented by Pat - W0BM. We will finalize plans for the Med City Marathon and discuss ideas for Field Day, The new Vice President will also be announced. Cookies will be provided.
- **Sunday May 17th is the Med City Marathon.** If you haven't signed up yet, go to <https://www.rarchams.org/wp/public-service/> to reserve your position. It's also a good way to get a new shirt!

Don't forget to participate in the local Nets and keep the repeaters busy. There are more people out there listening than you think and it's a great way to bring people to the hobby.

Have a great month everybody!

73

Jared - KFØPGS

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## RARC Training



AMATEUR RADIO

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**Field Day 2026 planning begins at 6:30 PM in the Rochester EOC at 2105 Wheelock Drive NE in the lower level of Rochester Fire Station # 2  
The RARC monthly club meeting follows**

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## May RARC Meeting ZOOM Login Information



Below is the ZOOM login information for the 05/14/2026 6:30 PM CDT RARC Meeting

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

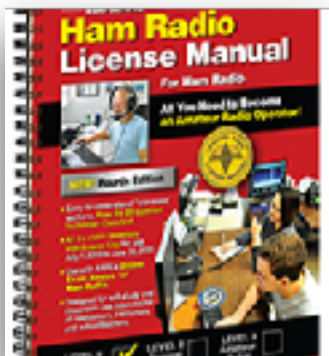
<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/9876548873?pwd=T0JBWEFzSctBYzhiazA1NTdDb2Rkdz09>

**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:** #####



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# Education

Dave - KØVH

**The Radio Amateur's Handbook (RARC) section has been repurposed to provide resources for new ham radio operators or those seeking to upgrade their licenses.**

I would appreciate detailed information from you this month. **This information is primarily intended for individuals who recently obtained their first ham radio license, particularly those with a KFØ prefix, within the past few years. Additionally, it is relevant for those who have recently upgraded their licenses.**

**To assist you in preparing for the licensing test**, I would like to inquire about the methods you used to acquire the necessary knowledge. Some examples include:

1. Attending live **"ZOOM"** based classes, such as those offered by the [Maple Grove Amateur Radio Club](#) (MN), or attending live classes at locations that still provide them.
2. Utilizing ARRL books, such as the License Manual or Tech Prep Q&A.
3. Exploring other ARRL resources, such as [ARRL Exam Review](#) or the website <https://www.arrl.org/gordon-west>.
4. Conducting general Google searches and taking online tests to familiarize yourself with the question pool and practice passing the test. I recently received an email about MyHamRadioStudy; have you used this resource?
5. Collaborating with mentors or experienced ham radio operators (e.g., GMRS, CB, engineering) to take a few online practice tests and successfully pass. Naturally, individuals upgrading to General or Extra can gain valuable knowledge through experience.
6. Any other methods you may have employed.

What are your plans for utilizing this information? After gathering more input at the May RARC meeting, I will incorporate feedback and anonymous comments into a future Hamster publication and the RARC website to assist future ham radio operators.

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# ARES

## Amateur Radio Emergency Service

### Olmsted ARES Mission Statement:

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

### ARES/AUX-COMM

On April 18th, a meeting was held with 15 attendees. The meeting commenced with discussions on establishing a new ARES/skywarn information tool for both the Olmsted and Rochester EOCs.

The tool was successfully installed and tested with 15 ZOOM operators simultaneously. During our last skywarn potential activation, NCS utilized ZOOM online, enabling both EOCs to communicate and view each other in real-time. We eagerly anticipate deploying this tool during our next ARES/skywarn activation.

The tool allows us to transmit live feeds from any location to both EOCs simultaneously. The EOC Directors are eager to witness its full operational capabilities.

Ground rules must be adhered to during ARES and Skywarn activations. The primary rule is to always mute your audio and video until you are prepared to transmit a live stream. This precaution is crucial to prevent confusion, as you did not "mute both video and audio" on your end. All audio communications will be transmitted through the NCS radio frequency, regardless of whether you are streaming live video, ensuring that everyone remains informed.

While there may be a learning curve initially, once you become comfortable with the process, it will significantly enhance ARES/skywarn as a source of live ground truth information.

As before, we request that you provide the [w0mxw@yahoo.com](mailto:w0mxw@yahoo.com) email field information. The ZOOM link serves as an additional live information tool.

Please remember that radio communications remains our primary and most reliable information source.

For further information and registration as an ARES member, please contact [w0stv@yahoo.com](mailto:w0stv@yahoo.com). Our inaugural public service event will be the Med City Marathon on May 17th. We have allocated all water stop stations to

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and wish to work with one of the water stop radio operators, please email [w0stv@yahoo.com](mailto:w0stv@yahoo.com) or call 507-254-3993.

**Skywarn:**

When did April become so active that it seems like June? Your enthusiasm to serve our EOCs and the NWS La Crosse shows. There were 3 tracks of tornado damage that day.

Red Cross damage assessments showed there was almost as much damage in the rural areas as there was in Stewartville and Rochester city limits. This is the reason storm spotters need to keep track of where they think the storm damage is and investigate those areas after the storm has passed. Keep your APRS on when doing damage assessments. This gives NCS a location to record for later review. Also, keep APRS on until net control has checked you out to keep our record keeping current. The transition from the 147.255 to the 146.820 repeater when the 255 became quiet during the tornado outbreak was a smooth operation. The backup generator failed to start when power was knocked out at the tower site. They have fixed the problem. This is why we train, review, and check into the Sunday night ARES net. Not all information goes through the [groups.io](https://groups.io) link.

You are why Dodge/Olmsted County storm spotters are rated as one of the top storm spotting groups in the nation. Keep doing what you're doing. Thank you!

Check this website for live detailed information on all severe storms in the country: [🔴 LIVE - SEVERE WEATHER OUTBREAK COVERAGE - With Storm Chasers On The Ground...](#)

If you want to be involved in the Olmsted amateur radio community or have ham radio questions. Please join our RARC [group.io](https://groups.io) email reflector at [rarchams@groups.io](mailto:rarchams@groups.io) | [Home](#)  
The only requirement for this group of ham radio operators is that you are a currently licensed ham radio operator.

The more you know 73

**Steve Wiebke (W0STV) - Olmsted/Rochester ARES EC**

***The more preparation, the less confusion***

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# Contest Corner

Fred - K4IU

**Spring contesting season is here**, and it's time to fire up the rigs and join the action! May contesters will be busy with lively state QSO parties and powerhouse international competitions like CQM, the Volta RTTY, and the always interesting PSK and CW WPX contests. And of course, May is the month for the legendary [Dayton Hamvention](#) in Xenia, Ohio May 15-17 where thousands of hams gather for gear, learning, and all things ham radio. Whether you're chasing new multipliers, sharpening your skills, or simply soaking in the excitement, May offers a lot of opportunities to get on the air and be part of the fun.

- **2-3 May:** QSO parties galore! [7<sup>th</sup> Call Area](#), [Delaware](#), [Indiana](#), [New England](#) are all going this weekend.
- **9-10 May:** [VOLTA WW RTTY](#): This is the 60<sup>th</sup> running of one of the oldest RTTY Contests sponsored by our Italian friends.
- **10-11 May:** [CQ-M International DX](#) contest: This is the Russian version of the WPX contest. It includes both SSB and CW modes with RS(T) and serial number exchange.
- **17 May** [EU PSK DX Contest](#): You'll find lots of activity for this contest especially on the European side. Check out the web page for suggested frequencies.last
- **30-31 May** [CQWW WPX CW](#): This is the CW version of last months. It's a favorite with everyone working everyone! Check the rules for this one.

You can see there is a lot in May to keep you busy. Also, I hope we'll get some reports and photos back from those lucky RARC hams going to Dayton. Check the [WA7BNM calendar](#) website for more May contests and details.



**Besides good antennas, good radios and good conditions** I want to describe some advanced techniques that help to improve the “rate” of QSOs that many contesters use where the winners often squeeze 11,000 QSOs into a 48-hour period. In addition to this SO2R [YouTube video](#) I’ve included an AI generated schematic to illustrate the concepts.

SO2R (Single Operator, Two Radios) and SO2V (Single Operator, Two VFOs) are contesting techniques designed to increase QSO rates by minimizing idle time and allowing operators to work more stations in the same amount of time.

**SO2R** uses two independent radios. The operator runs a frequency on one radio while using the second to search for new stations or multipliers. By listening and tuning on the second radio during transmit cycles on the first, the operator can interleave QSOs and keep both radios productive. This technique boosts rates by reducing downtime between callers, enabling simultaneous activity on two bands, and helping operators catch short propagation openings without abandoning their run.





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**SO2V** provides a similar advantage using only one radio with two VFOs. The operator runs on VFO A while tuning nearby frequencies with VFO B, often using dualwatch audio. Although limited to one band at a time, SO2V still allows quick pick up of new stations or multipliers without losing the run frequency. It improves efficiency by reducing band changes, speeding up S&P, and keeping the operator active during natural lulls.

Both techniques increase contest rates by filling every spare moment with productive listening or tuning, turning otherwise wasted seconds into additional QSOs.

That's it for this month. CU on the bands!

73

Fred K4IU



# Hamster Hints

Bob - KEØEXE

**In the February 2026 Hamster Hints, I outlined requirements for a “weather shield,” for a portable generator** like those used by ARES and our Radio Club during emergencies and on Field Days. (I also presented this at the subsequent RARC meeting, where it was briefly discussed.) Now, as Field Day approaches and we’ve had time to think about a practical fulfillment of these requirements, I propose an idea for implementation.

Without first describing all the other ideas I considered (and discarded), I’ll jump right in, noting that much credit here goes to W0STV. During our discussion, Steve proposed the “inexpensive and simple” solution of somehow affixing a flat sheet of rigid plastic “above and over” the generator. For instance, this could be a large piece of polycarbonate, possibly set on legs, and, because it would never be perfectly level (when erected expediently), it would naturally shed any rainfall to one or two of its four edges, which could then drip to the ground, safely away from the generator. Such a rain barrier could be given a height which would still allow a caretaker to easily access the generator, underneath, for adjustments and refueling.

The challenge became how to fashion a simple, robust support system for such a “roof.” As I pondered this over the next few days, the obvious solution was to find and use a commercially available folding table—an “outdoor-rated” model that already had integrated legs for support. As I considered various shapes and sizes, a standard, fold-up card table seemed to be the right solution—big enough to completely overshadow a generator, yet small enough to be easily managed (not to mention being square—which is quite possibly a better shape than a rectangle, for this purpose). If not large enough to deflect heavy, splashy rainfall, I reasoned that a small tarp could be stretched over the table, anchored to the ground with stakes and lines, in such an orientation as to provide the proper, wind-directed rain shielding. Such a tarp would also provide



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A superior drip edge to direct runoff. Overall, this installation would be inexpensive, quick to set up, customizable, lightweight, easily stored, and very effective.

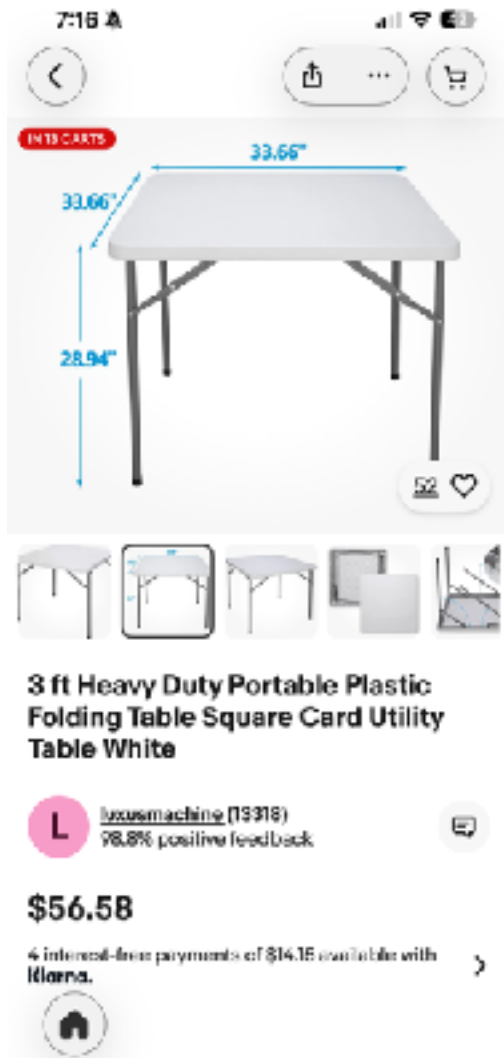
I want to point out one other solution, too: There are available some generator shields which are specifically made for a similar purpose. They typically attach to the generator for anchoring, are made from flexible plastic “fabric,” and have flaps which can be opened to gain access to the generator’s various ports and controls. One that is carefully selected might be adequate. However, the reasons I do not consider this as the preferred solution are as follows: (1) the best of these covers tend to be matched to a particular model or type of generator, (2) they require more thought and time during setup, (3) they don’t protect as large an area (for dryness), and (4) the good ones are more expensive than the highly-flexible solution I’ve outlined above. Plus, they have only one purpose, whereas all of the components in the “Tarp-n-Table” system (I had to give it a name!) could be used for other purposes, as well, assuming they were not being utilized to protect the generator.

In the following pages are some screen-shots of the “best” outdoor card-table I could find, which would cost less than \$65 (including tax). (Add a tarp, lines, stakes, and even rigid plastic-pipe leg-risers, and the total is still well under \$100.) Please review the photographs, noting that the steel is power-coated, for enhanced life against rust, and the legs on this model have welded braces, for increased strength—which is important for this particular use.

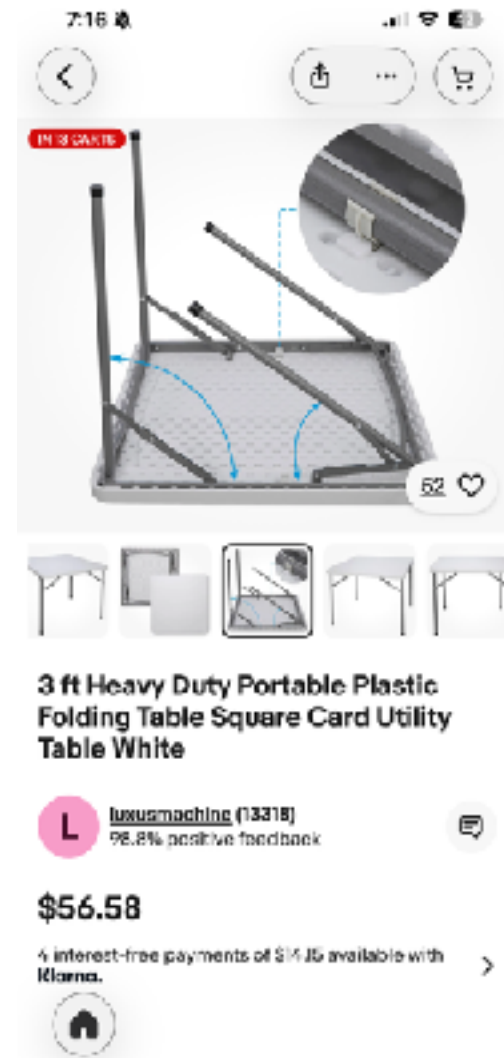
If anyone has another idea, please let’s discuss it prior to our next business meeting, as I otherwise intend to bring a motion to allocate up to \$100 to purchase a tarp-and-table system, so we can have a solution in place before Field Day.



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Proposed, free-standing card-table.



Detail of folding legs.



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**3 ft Heavy Duty Portable Plastic Folding Table Square Card Utility Table White**

**L** [luxusmachine \(19318\)](#)  
98.8% positive feedback

**\$56.58**

4 interest-free payments of \$14.16 available with Klarna.



**Detail of welded leg-corners and powder-coated metal.**



**3 ft Heavy Duty Portable Plastic Folding Table Square Card Utility Table White**

**L** [luxusmachine \(19318\)](#)  
98.8% positive feedback

**\$56.58**

4 interest-free payments of \$14.16 available with Klarna.



**Leg-locking system and plastic-cap "foot."**

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## RARC TECH COMMITTEE

Eric - KF0S

### Tech Committee - 4/13/26

Attendees: Attendance was limited due to ongoing SkyWarn net.

- **Mayo**
  - 82 Repeater
    - 60 Hz hum (?) noted last month hasn't reappeared.
    - Noise noted by 1 or 2 operators during last weekend's net (4/12/26). No one else reported any noise. Discussion was had about windy/rainy conditions and if that might have had an effect. Also, tower is getting older and is grounding between sections an issue.
    - Will continue to monitor both.
      - *I was mailed the hum was heard during the SkyWarn net on April 16th by one individual.*
- **From last month**
  - Digipeater
    - Still need to get 2 keys from John Scott.
  - Get club license in order. Instructions noted previously.

Eric Van Norman, KF0S



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## RARC MEETING MINUTES

Collin - AAØCN

- **ARES** meeting this Saturday at the Rochester EOC
- **POTA** May 3 at 1PM @ Douglas Trailhead in Douglas, MN, led by NØSPN
- **VE Test Session** on May 13th at the Rochester Red Cross at 7PM (350 Alliance Place, Rochester, MN)
  - Austin has a VE test session on April 15th at the Austin COC at 7PM. ( \$15 + FRN + Gov ID)
- **Med City Marathon** - May 17th
- **Field Day 2026** - June 27-28
- **Weekly Nets** - New Hobby Net at 8PM Tuesdays on 147.255 repeater (all but ham radio). See website list for details.
- **Breakfast at Grandma's Kitchen** in Silver Lake Shopping Center Saturdays at 6:30AM
- **Weekly Coffee/Breakfast chat** on Wednesdays at Roosters
- **Secretary's report** read and received
- **Treasurer's report** - see page in this Hamster
- **Contests** - no report (see Contest Corner in this Hamster for all the details)
- **Education** - DMR class in Owatonna, Dan said we might want to set up repeater in RST, KAØMYG will look into
- **JM Radio Club** - Discussion next year's plans, one student plans to test in May, investigating permanent antenna
- **ARES/Public Service** have combined, Skywarn activation went well, working on new maps - available Saturday
  - April 28th Skywarn webinar at [weather.gov/arx](https://www.weather.gov/arx) at 6PM - April 15th was cancelled
  - Med City Marathon on May 17th see signup page on the RARC website
  - ZOOM meeting and video links to NWS in the future
  - Field Day 2026 on June 27-28
  - Olmsted County EOC near Gamehaven Lake/Fleet Farm Burn Tower area
  - Hoping to run 24hr although secure area - 4 RARC hams have access
  - Someone with webmaster access to update the Google sheet signup
- **See Monday's P-B** for the RARC breakfast article (reprinted in this issue of the Hamster).

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# RARC TREASURER'S REPORT

George - NØUM

|                         |                    |
|-------------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Opening Balance:</b> | \$2,440.35         |
| Checking:               |                    |
| Credits:                |                    |
| Dues:                   | \$30.00            |
| PayPal Dues:            | \$190.00           |
| Equipment Sold:         |                    |
| Raffle:                 | \$13.00            |
| Donation:               |                    |
| Misc:                   |                    |
| Debits:                 |                    |
| RPU                     | \$38.24            |
| Meeting Food            | \$70.78            |
| Paypal Charges          | \$6.74             |
| Field Day:              |                    |
| Picnic                  |                    |
| Equipment               |                    |
| Tower Lease             |                    |
| Insurance               |                    |
| Web domain              |                    |
| Postage                 |                    |
| Misc.                   | \$5.00             |
| Total:                  | \$2,552.59         |
| <b>Savings:</b>         |                    |
| Opening Balance         | \$8,829.63         |
| Credits:                |                    |
| Interest:               | \$.36              |
| Closing Balance:        | \$8,829.99         |
| <b>TOTAL</b>            | <b>\$11,382.58</b> |
| CD Matures January      | \$4,000.00         |
| CD Matures January      | \$4,849.51         |

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## Happenings In The Dakota Division

Bill Lippert - ACØW - ARRL Dakota Division Director

With World Amateur Radio Day falling on a Saturday in April several groups are putting a station on the air. Join the fun and take some time to work a few of them. Details below.

The next three weekends are hamfest that I'm planning to be at along with your section manager. First is Brainerd. Next is in Grand Forks and finally Superior, WI. Hope to see you at one of those.

With tornado warnings in my area today indicates it is severe weather season. Don't forget to attend your Skywarn training this year.

Short list this time, have a good week.

73  
Bill Lippert ACØW  
ARRL Director  
Dakota Division  
[ac0w@arrl.org](mailto:ac0w@arrl.org)

### Division elected leaders:

**Director** Bill Lippert, ACØW [ac0w@arrl.org](mailto:ac0w@arrl.org)  
**Vice Director** Chris Stallkamp, KIØD [ki0d@arrl.org](mailto:ki0d@arrl.org)

**MN Section Manager** Bill Mitchell, AEØEE [ae0ee@arrl.org](mailto:ae0ee@arrl.org)  
**ND Section Manager** Ralph Fettig, NØRDF [fettigrd@gmail.com](mailto:fettigrd@gmail.com)  
**SD Section Manager** Vacant

### SPECIAL OPERATING EVENTS

**April** – all month  
**ARRL Amateur Radio Open House**



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It's the Year of the Club, and the second annual ARRL Ham Radio Open House in April offers a chance to show off your club's high-tech gear and skills to your community! ARRL is encouraging radio clubs and schools to promote amateur radio science and technology by opening their stations to the public with an open house during the month of April. In addition, groups are encouraged to set up in public places or conduct outdoor activities, such as a Parks on the Air® (POTA) activation or satellite contact. The open-house event is held around World Amateur Radio Day on Saturday, April 18, but your open house may be scheduled at any point in the month.

Add your event to the Open House Locator  
[www.arrl.org/open-house](http://www.arrl.org/open-house)

**July 4 – 5**, 1500 – 2359 UTC; K0ND  
Theodore Roosevelt Presidential Library Dedication  
Theodore Roosevelt Amateur Radio Club  
K0ND - 28.430, 21.375, 14.340  
QSL – TRARC  
PO BOX 1854  
Dickinson, ND 58602-1854  
[www.trlibrary.com](http://www.trlibrary.com)

**HAMFESTS** (all times local time):

**5/2** – 9 AM – 1 PM  
ARAC Hamfest '26  
ARRL Representatives  
Arrowhead Radio Amateur Club  
Head of the Lakes Fairgrounds, Multi-Purpose Building  
4700 Tower Ave  
Superior, WI  
Contact: [arac\\_hamfest@charter.net](mailto:arac_hamfest@charter.net)  
<https://thearac.org/hamfest.php>  
[www.arrl.org/hamfests/a-r-a-c-hamfest-3](http://www.arrl.org/hamfests/a-r-a-c-hamfest-3)

**VE TEST SESSIONS** (all times local times)

**VE - South Dakota**

**5/2** – 10:00 AM Hot Springs, SD; must preregister  
Contact: [k0ork@yahoo.com](mailto:k0ork@yahoo.com)



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2005 Library DR  
Hot Springs, SD

[www.arrl.org/exam\\_sessions/hot-springs-sd-57747-2767-55](http://www.arrl.org/exam_sessions/hot-springs-sd-57747-2767-55)

**5/12** – 7:00 PM Sioux Falls, SD; must preregister

Contact: [wgravning@yahoo.com](mailto:wgravning@yahoo.com)

Sioux Empire Amateur Radio Club  
Minnehaha County Emergency Mngt Bldg  
608 N Sigler Ave  
Sioux Falls SD

<https://hamstudy.org/sessions/SEARC/all>

[www.arrl.org/exam\\_sessions/sioux-falls-sd-57104-40](http://www.arrl.org/exam_sessions/sioux-falls-sd-57104-40)

### **VE - North Dakota**

**5/2** – 10:15 AM Minot, ND; contact [newdesignsbbs@hotmail.com](mailto:newdesignsbbs@hotmail.com) ; must preregister

1949 North Broadway, Minot ND

[www.arrl.org/exam\\_sessions/minot-nd-58703-620](http://www.arrl.org/exam_sessions/minot-nd-58703-620)

### **VE - Minnesota**

**5/2** – 9:30 AM Roseville, MN; must preregister

Contact [pipemajor2@gmail.com](mailto:pipemajor2@gmail.com)

St. Paul Radio Club

Galilee Lutheran Church, 145 McCarrons Blvd N, Roseville MN

[www.arrl.org/exam\\_sessions/roseville-mn-55113-6923-39](http://www.arrl.org/exam_sessions/roseville-mn-55113-6923-39)

**5/5** – 6:00 PM Bemidji, MN;

Contact: [milocke@paulbunyan.net](mailto:milocke@paulbunyan.net)

Paul Bunyan Amateur Radio Club  
Beltrami County LEC Training Rm  
613 Minnesota Ave NW  
Bemidji MN

[www.arrl.org/exam\\_sessions/bemidji-mn-56601-3036-45](http://www.arrl.org/exam_sessions/bemidji-mn-56601-3036-45)

**5/09** – 9:00 AM Blaine, MN; must preregister

Contact: [n0nmz@AnokaRadio.org](mailto:n0nmz@AnokaRadio.org)

Anoka County Radio Club

Blaine City Hall, 10801 Town Square Dr NE, Blaine MN

[www.arrl.org/exam\\_sessions/blaine-mn-55449-8100-160](http://www.arrl.org/exam_sessions/blaine-mn-55449-8100-160)



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**5/13** – 7:00 PM Lakeville, MN;

contact: [NOOA@ARRL.NET](mailto:NOOA@ARRL.NET)

Valley Amateur Radio Club

17387 Kenyon Avenue, Lakeville MN

[www.arrl.org/exam\\_sessions/lakeville-mn-55044-4459-205](http://www.arrl.org/exam_sessions/lakeville-mn-55044-4459-205)

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**ARRL Dakota Division**

**Director:** Vernon E Lippert, ACØW

[ac0w@arrl.org](mailto:ac0w@arrl.org)

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**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 is a link for you to view what the [ARRL](#) offers Hams. Take a look:**

**[ARRL Benefits](#)**

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Wednesday Morning **RARC** Ham Radio Gathering

**You Are Invited!**

*Stop By For Breakfast or Coffee  
&  
Ham Radio Talk!*



• **Wednesdays at 9:00 AM (1400 UTC)**

**Rooster's (North Location) - 2280 Superior Drive NW**

April 2026



## Parks On The Air® (POTA)

*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 national 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.



**K4IU during a recent POTA activation at [Fort DeRussy Park](#), Hawaii**



## *Special To The Hamster*

### **Ham radio club looks for connections beyond Rochester**

The original worldwide web has its own version of social media: ham radio

BY JOHN SIEVERS - FOR THE POST BULLETIN

**When the Rochester Amateur Radio Club (RARC) meets for breakfast at Grandma's Kitchen at 6:30 on Saturday mornings**, discussion of "ham" usually has nothing to do with a choice of breakfast meats. "They come to Grandma's Every Saturday," says Grandma's Kitchen waitress Mary as she takes their orders. Gathered around a backroom table in Grandma's Kitchen, several RARC members and amateur radio enthusiast share both their call signs, the combinations of letters and numbers that identify them when they are broadcasting, and their names. Pat Cahill's call sign is W0BM. He became involved with amateur radio in 1974 and joined RARC when he moved to Rochester in 1979.

Lynn Landin call sign WB0U, moved to Rochester and got involved with the club that same year. Glenn Becklund got his amateur license in the mid '80s. Jared Pfaffenbach, the current president of RARC, is the newcomer to amateur radio at the breakfast. He's been broadcasting from his call sign KF0PGS for the last two years. He became the RARC club president this past January. "I kept showing up, and that's how I got to be club president," jokes Pfaffenbach. RARC has regular meetings on the second Tuesday of the month and also sponsors a variety of in-person social meet ups each week in addition to meet ups over the radio airwaves called "nets." The club, a nonprofit affiliated with the National Association for Amateur Radio, includes everyone from retirees to teens. Its mission is to





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“advance general interest and knowledge of amateur radio, promote cooperation and exchange information between members, conduct club programs, and provide public service support for community activities.” Pfaffenbach, the RARC president, works as an electrician. He moved back to the Rochester area from Iowa in 2007. “There is a certain magic of talking into a microphone and invisible electrons going out, bouncing, someone else picking that up and then coming back here,” says Pfaffenbach as he fiddles with knobs on several radios in his garage. Amid squawks and static, he finds a voice transmitted over invisible waves saying “CQ,” the universal letters amateur radio operators broadcast when they are trying to make contact with another operator. Pfaffenbach explains it comes from the way the letters CQ, easily transmitted by morse code, sound like the words “seek you.” As Pfaffenbach works his radios, he explains how he made contact. “This is on the 20-meter band, and you are relying on the ionosphere to bounce your signal. The way it works is your signal goes up and up and up and bounces off the ionosphere and wherever it comes back down they can hear you. I can talk to a person in North Carolina but someone 70 miles from here may not be able to hear me at all.” The RARC club has a long history that dates back to at least the 1930s. The club currently has about 100 members, but when it started, its first small meetings were held in members’ homes. Over the years, as the club grew, its meetings moved to the Rochester Electric Plant, the Red Cross Building, the Olmsted County Courthouse, the State Hospital, Samaritan Bethany Manor and the Salvation Army building. One of the earliest known club social events was a banquet held in 1932. In 1984, the club was combined with another area amateur radio group called the Rochester Repeater Society. In this digital age, some might be surprised to find there are so many still interested in amateur radio. “Everybody always says the death of ham radio has come,” says RARC club member Cahill. “First it was computers and then it was cell phones, but over the years the percentage of ham radio operators has stayed relatively constant.” Pfaffenbach says that some of his interest in the hobby stems from wanting to have a means of communication in emergency situations when other methods of communicating might be disabled. He says he got



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involved with RARC because it was a local organization that offered the nationally required amateur radio licensure test. A desire to participate with SKYWARN — a national network of volunteer weather spotters who are trained to identify and locate severe weather like hail, thunderstorms and tornadoes — was also part of Pfaffenbach’s motivation to get involved with amateur radio. After he got his amateur radio license, Pfaffenbach volunteered with the Amateur Radio Emergency Services group. Allan Palmer, an amateur radio enthusiast based in Rochester, met Pfaffenbach over the radio airwaves during one of the RARC club’s Monday night Elmer Nets. The Elmer Net is a meet up that happens over the airwaves where expert and beginner amateur radio operators can ask and answer questions about ham radio. While Palmer isn’t a member of RARC, he’s considering joining the club. “Summer 2025 is when I did a deep dive on the hobby and started studying for my technician license exam,” he says. “I appreciate the analog technology factor for sure. There’s something really satisfying about communicating via radio. Emergency preparedness is another reason I gravitated towards the hobby.” “It is a big hobby. You can do all types of different things,” says Pfaffenbach. “There are guys who bounce their signals off the moon and try to make contact that way.” Cahill enjoys taking part in DX challenges, which are distance challenges that require operators to make contact with foreign operators. “It is a social thing,” says Pfaffenbach, sitting in his garage surrounded by radio equipment. “You can sit here and pick up the mic and talk to someone.”

Contact freelance writer John Sievers at [life@postbulletin.com](mailto:life@postbulletin.com).

**Reprinted from the Rochester Post-Bulletin**

April 2026



## Weekly Nets

- Sunday:**
- Austin 73 Sunday Evening Net** - 7 PM - 146.730 MHz. PL 100
  - Owatonna/ Steele Co. Amateur Radio Club Net** - 7:30 PM - 145.490 PL 100
  - Fillmore Co. Amateur Radio Net** - 7:45 PM - 147.015 PL 110.9 and 444.250 PL 136.5
  - Goodhue Co ARES Net/ Hiawatha Valley Amateur Radio Club Net** - 8 PM - 147.300 PL 136.5
  - Dodge Co ARES Net** - 8:30 PM - 146.820 PL 100
  - River Bend Wireless and Mechanical Society Sunday Night 2m Net** - 8:30 PM - 146.790 PL 100
  - Winona Emergency Preparedness Net** - 8:30 PM 146.835 PL 131.8
  - Olmsted County ARES Net** - 9 PM - 146.820 even days/ 147.255 odd days both PL 100
  
  - MN D Star Net** - 7:30 PM - Reflector XLX632A
  - Southern MN Fusion Net** - 8:30pm - Wires X Rm 40861
  - 144.260 USB Net** - 9 PM - KA0PQW in Ellendale - Net Control
- Monday:**
- Elmers Net** - 8 PM - 147.255 PL 100
  - Waseca Digital Practice Net** - 7 PM - 146.715 PL 141.3
- Tuesday:**
- Rochester 10m SSB net** - 7 PM - 28.325 MHz USB
  - River Bend Wireless and Mechanical Society (RBMWS) 80m Digital Net** - 8pm - 3.583 MHz. - Olivia 8 - 500
- Wednesday:**
- Southeast MN Digital ARES Net** - 7 PM - 146.820 PL 100 - MT63 2000L
  - RBWMS 2m Digital Net** - 8 PM - 146.790 PL 100 - PSK125RC12
  - Wednesday Night Experiment** - 9pm - 146.790 PL 100
- Thursday:**
- 80m MN Digital ARES Net** - 8 PM - 3.583.5 MHz. - Olivia 8 - 500
  - 2m Simplex Daisy Chain Net** - 8:30 PM - 145.190 PL 100/146.520
- Saturday:**
- 20m IBM Net** - 11 AM - 14.347 MHz.

**NEW! Hobby Net** (discussing any hobby but ham radio)  
Tuesday evenings at 8PM on the 147.255 repeater



April 2026

# 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/>

**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 have any questions or comments about the Hamster or are interested in perhaps being a contributor please feel free to [contact me](#).

Thank you for reading the Rochester Amateur Radio Club's  
Official Publication.

**G. Mark Kelm - KØGMK - Editor**