



THE HAMSTER

January 2025

Official Monthly Newsletter of the *Rochester Amateur Radio Club*

Happy New Year!





THE HAMSTER

2025 Rochester Amateur Radio Club Officers

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

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

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

Secretary: [Collin Howe](#) (AAOCN)

Member-at-large: [Steve Wiebke](#) (WOSTV)

Trustee: [Gil Baron](#) (WOMN)

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

- ◆ **Table Of Contents** - page 2
- ◆ **NEW The Editor Says...** - page 3
- ◆ **RARC Holiday Party** - page 4
- ◆ **UPDATED Education** - page 5
- ◆ **125Live Ham Radio Club** - page 6
- ◆ **NEW SkyWarn Recognition Day** - page 7
- ◆ **ARES** - page - 8
- ◆ **Contest Corner** - pages 9-10
- ◆ **Hamster Hints** - pages 11-12
- ◆ **Technical Committee Report** - pages 13-15
- ◆ **Winter POTA** - page 16
- ◆ **RARC Buy - Sell -Trade** - page 17
- ◆ **Local Ham Radio Nets** - page 18
- ◆ **RARC December Meeting Minutes** - 19-22
- ◆ **ARRL Membership Info** - page 23
- ◆ **RARC Contact Info** - page 24



THE HAMSTER



The Editor Says...

[G. Mark Kelm](#) (K0GMK)

First, let me thank the terrific team of regular contributors that make the Hamster a valuable tool for members each month

And they are: **Fred (K4IU)**, **Bob (KE0EXE)**, **Dave (K0VH)**, **Eric (KF0S)**, **Steve (W0STV)**, RARC club officers and other contributors that make RARC and this newsletter better.

Also, a huge thank you to all the 2024 RARC club officers that chose to serve again in 2025. It's not always an easy job but thankfully to these hams the job always gets done.

2024 was a busy year for ARES/SkyWarn with regular monthly training meetings that are designed to ready these personnel to serve our community in the event of an emergency. **Also special recognition to Steve Wiebke (W0STV)** who as the **Olmsted County ARES Emergency Coordinator** leads the training of this team along with leadership of the **125Live Ham Radio Club** and a myriad of other RARC and community activities. Additionally, thank you to all the ARES/SkyWarn members for their help during Sky-Warn severe weather activations and public service events.

Thank you to Taylor (WB0RSJ) and Steve (W0STV) who led Field Day 2023 and 2024 to success in spite of weather and location issues.

A special note to all members of RARC - it is imperative that we have club participation by all members. **Field Day 2025 is a short 6 months from now** and early planning for the event is crucial. That said, **this is an excellent opportunity for those new hams in RARC to garner some valuable planning and leadership experience.** Don't worry about being left to fend for yourself as there are a number of Field Day seasoned members that will lend a hand and provide guidance. Please consider this.

I have decided to shelve the Member Ham Shack Photo pages for a while. We may not always get to meet face to face but all hams are always interested in "ham shack equipment" and the photo page is a great way to "introduce" yourself. A simple cell phone photo of your shack and a short description will suffice and can be sent to my email address by clicking on my name above.

There is no RARC meeting this month as it's time for the annual holiday party on January 14th at Roosters Too in the Shoppes On Maine. You will find all the details and a map to the location (near Lowe's) on page 4 of this issue of the Hamster.

Finally, if you have any POTA, vacation (with rig of course), or helping other hams I would be very appreciative of you sharing. Don't worry about being a wordsmith because that's my job and I will gladly collect your thoughts into an article in the Hamster.



RARC Holiday Party

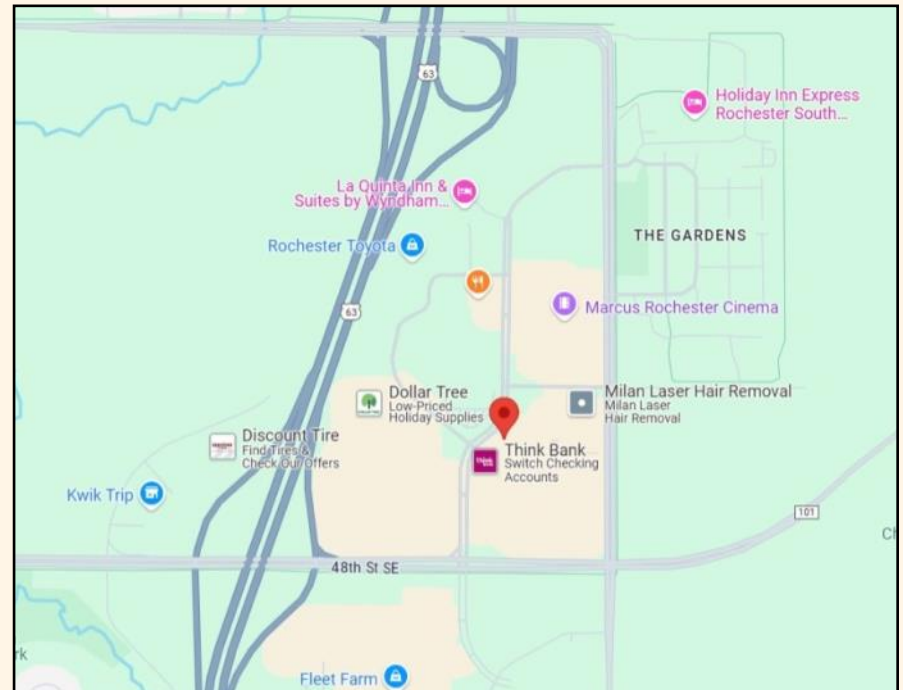
Dan Stroh (N0SPN) - Vice-President

January 14th 2025 @ 6:00 PM

* No Regular Meeting At Fire Station # 2 In January

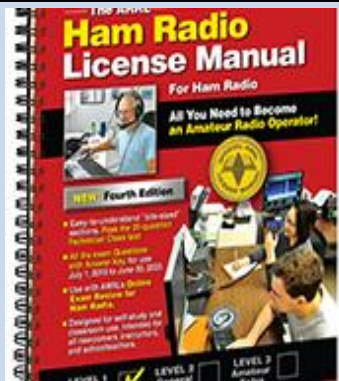
Roosters Too

in the Shoppes On Maine (adjacent to Lowe's)



Education

Dave (KØVH)



2025 **Online ZOOM Technician Class Schedule**

Presented by: [Maple Grove Radio Club \(K0LTC\)](#):

- **NEW HAMS - [TECHNICIAN LICENSE ZOOM Classes](#)**: Every Wednesday from Feb 5th, 2025 to April 9th. Class time: 6:45 – 9:15 pm (\$10 due first day of class) [purchase Technician Class License Manual](#)

To Register Click The Following Link: registration@mnyarc.org

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!



125Live Ham Radio Club



Steve Wiebke (W0STV)

The 125live radio group met in the Technology room at 2:00 PM on December 17th.

The program was a basic version of Nate's (KFORMW) RARC APRS program. We had people install and operating apps and programs on their phones and computers. The meeting ran for 1 and 1/2 hours.

Next month's program will be on how to use the local EcoLink system to make contacts around the world.

Thanks to the RARC members who are also 125live social members for attending and contributing to educate the new technician licensed members. The more you contribute the better it gets for all of us.

Steve-W0STV
Olmsted ARES-EC
The more preparation, the less confusion.



The next meeting of the 125Live Ham Radio Club sponsored by RARC will be January 21st at 125Live in the Technology Learning Center room at 2:00 PM.



SKYWARN Recognition Day



SkyWarn Recognition Day was held at the NWS La Crosse, WI, office on Saturday, December 7th from 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM.

Hams from Minnesota and Wisconsin made contacts with other NWS stations across the US along with hams operating from their QTHs. This is an annual event recognizing the contribution that SkyWarn/ARES hams make in ensuring the safety of their communities by staffing Emergency Operations Centers (EOC) and deploying to monitor severe weather.

RARC hams that attended the event were Steve Wiebke (W0STV) Olmsted County ARES EC, George Hopkins (N0UM) RARC Treasurer and Melissa Erickson (KE0WNH) John Marshall High School (Rochester, MN) Radio Club Mentor.





ARES

Amateur Radio Emergency Service

The Olmsted SkyWarn group made a good representation at the La Crosse National Weather Service headquarters for their SkyWarn spotter appreciation day on December 7th from 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM. There were a lot of people from other county spotter groups there. The N.W.S. staff gave tours of the building and explained the new and future tools that they use to get more accurate and faster technical information on weather in the tri-state area. The food was good and plentiful, and comradery was great. You could operate any of the three HF radio stations that was set up by their local ham radio club to make contacts with other NWS centers and storm spotters in the USA. Propagation was not the best, and there were other HF contests operating at the same time. The Olmsted SkyWarn group added 2 states to the La Crosse NWS national radio contact map. If you have not attended one of these annual events, you need to plan to be there in 2025.

We were informed that Todd Shea will be retiring from the NWS this coming May. He has been an icon for many years for all the tristate spotter groups. For decades he has been teaching the annual storm spotter training programs in three states. He has been the one that gives and receives weather spotter information to net controllers to keep their field spotters safe and informed. He will be missed.

Olmsted and Fillmore SkyWarn took the time to have a fun day getting together for both our storm spotter teams. On December 21st a party was held at the Spring Valley Ambulance building with food, drinks, videos, and many gifts. There were so many gifts that everyone took home at least 2. The best reason was to meet each other's storm spotter counterparts and have a fun time, and that we did. The party/meeting took place from 10:00 AM to 1:00 PM. (went to 1:30). Next year we will host this event.

The Olmsted ARES group has started taking online training through the ARRL ARES basic training course. This program is available to anyone for free. ARES is a major part of both the Olmsted and Rochester EOC's operations staff and have responsibilities to deliver fast, accurate, and documented information. If you are interested in becoming one of our ARES team members, please email w0stv@yahoo.com. Give your name, call sign, and phone number and what time is good to call you in the text of the email. You may also join us at our next ARES meeting on January 18th starting at 9:00 AM at fire station #2 on Viola Road (same place as the RARC meetings).

Steve-W0STV

Olmsted ARES-EC

The more preparation, the less confusion.

Olmsted ARES Mission Statement:

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

Contest Corner

Fred (K4IU)



January starts the 2025 contest season. There are both VHF and HF events to look forward to this month. Here are a few of the more popular one's:

- **January 4-5** [ARRL RTTY Roundup](#): This contest typically takes place during the first weekend of January and involves making as many contacts as possible using RTTY (Radio Teletype) and other digital modes.
- **January 13** (CW) and January 21 (SSB) [North American QSO Party \(NAQP\)](#): This series includes both CW (Morse code) and SSB (voice) contests. The NAQP contests are known for their friendly atmosphere and are great for operators of all skill levels.
- **January 18-20** [VHF Contest](#): This is a weekend long event for amateurs to work as many stations in different grid squares as possible on frequencies above 50 MHz.
- **January 26** [CQ 160-Meter Contest](#): This contest focuses on the 160-meter band and is a favorite among those who enjoy low-band operation. The SSB version is in February.
- **January 25-26** [Winter Field Day](#): Held on the last full weekend of January. This event encourages emergency communication preparedness while having fun in a contest-like environment.

Click here for the [latest](#) updates to the January radio sport activities.



Contest Corner

Fred (K4IU)



This month we recognize two outstanding RARC members who recently received noteworthy recognition.



Congratulations to **Scott Wright (KØMD)** for receiving the **November 2024 QST Cover Plaque Award**.

This award is given to the author or authors of the most popular article in each issue and is determined by a vote of ARRL members. Scott's feature article, **Healthy Contesting Habits (p.52)**, was popular with many readers because it highlights important practices for maintaining well-being while participating in radiosport contests. It is a well-deserved recognition of his continuing contributions to the amateur radio community at the local and national level. His dedication to promoting the hobby, sharing his knowledge, and encouraging others to get involved has made a positive impact on the field. The QST cover award is a prestigious honor, and KØMD's selection reflects the respect and admiration he has earned among his peers. His work has inspired many and helped to strengthen the amateur radio community.

We are also proud to recognize **Mel (KCØP/r)** for winning the **Dakota Division Rover award for the 2024 ARRL June VHF Contest**.

Mel and Carol (NØHZO) are relentless in promoting contest activities at the high end of the spectrum. His many awards and first place finishes are a tribute to his dedication to the amateur radio community.

Division Winners

Classic Rover		
Atlantic	KF2MR/R	26,520
Central	K9TMS/R	13,804
Dakota	NØHZO/R	4,988
Dakota	KCØP/R	4,988
Great Lakes	N8AJM/R	522
Midwest	AF4JF/R	3,103
New England	WS1O/R	630
Northwestern	AC7SG/R	5,868
Pacific	KE6QR/R	5,376
Southeastern	AB4DX/R	5,488
Southwestern	N7GP/R	53,724
West Gulf	N5TJ/R	6
Canada	VE3OIL/R	116,850



Hamster Hints

Bob (KE0EXE)

It's early December as I write this, and the weather has turned bitterly cold already.

I'm looking out a window at tree-tops, realizing I did not have time this year to do proper antenna maintenance.....but, then again, it probably won't matter too much, as I likely won't have much time this winter to be on the radios, anyway. The last five years, it seems, have been all about acquiring a few nice pieces of equipment, which I plan to restore or put into use as part of several "era stations" (re: W0VLZ). Usually, these end up in a clear-plastic tub (with a lid), so I can find them easily later, when I'm ready to take the next step. I did take some good advice from KE0SHQ recently, to order a few "upgrade kits" for my Heathkit SB-200 Linear Amplifier. I didn't want to lose that opportunity simply because I had waited too long, even if I don't yet have the time to do the upgrade work. That is what Retirement is for, right? ...And, for me, that is still quite a ways off. In the meantime, I can always keep-up my Morse practice (because I've always felt that would be my biggest hurdle, anyway, and I've learned to tackle the hardest part of a task first, when it's practical).



- continued on next page



Hamster Hints

Bob (KE0EXE)

The second part of this column, this month, is an invitation.

While I've been writing the "Hamster Hints" for a few years now, I don't presume to own it. Before me, others began it and carried it--probably for longer than I realize. Perhaps I've said this before, but I welcome the variations, if anyone else has ideas for articles and would like to publish, in any given month. I do enjoy writing the column--and I will not stop supplying it to my friend and editor, Mark, without plenty of notice or a very good reason--but this last year did see me miss one publication (July) due to competing family responsibilities. Therefore, consider this an invitation, if you, a Reader, would like to be a Writer!, "here and there" or "now and again"--or even to try it out for an extended period. If so, just send an email to Mark and me, to work out the details. I'm sure the Readership wouldn't mind seeing some different content and style, if even only occasionally!



Technical Committee

Eric (KF0S)

Tech Committee Meeting Minutes - 12/9/24

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

Post meeting and RARC meeting comments in italics

Equipment Insurance:

- Equipment insurance obtained by George.

Equipment Sales

- **Bill Osler**

- Continue offering some items at club meetings.
- Test/Meters, Tape, Ropes for December meeting.
- Should we list HF radio on-line? Other items?
- Steve will post a few photos a week on the reflector.

- **Backup Repeaters**

- Where could we list?
- Twin Cities net on Saturday for buy/sell. 19:00 on 146.85 repeater.
- Local first vs shipping.
- \$25/\$100 Ham Fest special.
- Do we grab the one from Mayo?



Technical Committee

Eric (KFOS)

Other:

- **Mayo**

- Eric has information sheets. Will work with Darrel to get them there.
- Computer replacements?
 - Possible for D-STAR:
 - *Link removed as we are investigating different products.*
 - Does Mayo care what PC we would attach? Do we need to get from Mayo might be a better question.
 - Taylor and Darrel say we should be OK.
 - Consensus is order 2.
 - *During New business portion of meeting, discussed purchase. Club voted we should spend additional money and purchase hardware, possibly Protectli or minisforum, that may be more secure and have better quality. Cap is \$1500. Nate Evans and Jordan Benson will join in a email conversation with the Technical Committee on identifying and purchasing the needed hardware.*
 - Router. *Possibly move to newer supported router. Pat mentioned a Ubiquity EXR? might be available.*
- Gateway server discussion
 - Taylor suggested we don't worry about transferring the old registered user database.



Technical Committee

Eric (KF0S)

- **125 Live**
- 2 new Hams. Linda and ? now using equipment.
- **Control Operator Docs. Taylor mentioned starting on this.**
- Check with John S or Collin.
- **Olmsted EOC**
- Ready to install radios. Steve started on 12/9. Panels on and power supplies laid out. Eric will help complete on 12/10. *Sky Warn setup complete. HF radio didn't power on. Will work on getting that fixed. Digital side is still in progress.*
- **Rochester EOC**
- Lost EOC trailer storage in FS #2. Trailer will be moved to lower pad once there is an outlet, to keep battery charged.
- Trailer condensation issues?
- 20 A?
- Requested comparable to what we had inside. 120V RV plug. Lockable box cover as well?

**Respectively Submitted,
Eric (KF0S)**



Parks On The Air® (POTA)

It's *Winter* 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?](#)



RARC buy - sell - trade



Monarch "Super Sensitive" "Amateur Receiver" (yes, "Amateur" is mis-spelled on the faceplate), 4-band BC / HF radio. Nostalgic for me, and will pay well, according to cosmetic condition. Bob (KE0EXE), gettuit@charter.net.



ST-5000 Step Up Step Down Transformer 110V 220V Step Up Voltage Converter Transformer, 5kw rating, used once / no longer need, like-new condition, **\$100 firm** (\$129.99 on Amazon). See Bob, (KE0EXE), gettuit@charter.net



Astron RS-35M 13.8 volt power supply 35 amp peak, 25 amp continuous with volt and amp meters. Quiet linear supply, no RF noise, **\$150** Lynn (WB0U) **(507) 358-8459**

If you have any Ham related items that you want to sell, buy or trade locally, email the Hamster at RARC [Buy or Sell](#) or [Trade](#).



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.
- ♦ **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



RARC MEETING MINUTES

Meeting started 8:00PM

Announcements:

- Coffee Chat at Roosters by Costco Wednesday
- 7AM Grandma's kitchen Saturdays
- No ARES meeting this Saturday
- Raffle: Radio from JM Radio Club fundraiser
- No program for January: Holiday Party
- Feb/March programs Surprises will come!
- Secretary's report: Received.

Treasurer's report:

• **Checking:**

Opening Balance: \$ 8,693.54

• **Credits**

Dues: \$ 130.00

PayPal Dues: \$ 120.00

Equipment Sold: \$ 1,090.00

Equipment Sold: At Meeting \$ 105.00

• **Debits:**

RPU: \$ 44.54

Misc. Storage Unit \$ 110.18

Closing Balance: \$ 9,681.54

• **Savings:**

Opening Balance: \$ 1,825.56

Credits

Interest: \$ 0.07

Closing Balance: \$ 1,825.63

Total: \$ 11,507.17

CD Matures March 2025 \$4,000.00

CD Matures March 2025 \$4,347.36



RARC MEETING MINUTES

- **Technical Committee : 8 attendees**

Equipment insurance obtained

K0RGR stuff in storage unit, tape/ropes at tonight's meetings

May sell more stuff before Hamfest season

Backup repeaters discussed. Discussed listing places.

Some computers need repair/updates. Dual NIC mini PC needed, \$150 device x2 to replace current machines.

Does Mayo care if our own equipment is there? Not on Mayo network, think this is OK

125 Live discussion, Controller operator docs discussed.

Tech Committee is open on Zoom, Monday nights before meeting. Looking for 2025 members!

DMR Repeater; a few individuals have been running a few different ones.

Mayo bandwidth is not great – 1.5Mbps. RARC might consider other locations with good internet!

- **Contesting:**

This weekend is 10m voice and CW contest.

- **Education:**

February Technician Class coming up

- **JM Radio Club:**

Raffle and attendance at RARC!



RARC MEETING MINUTES

- **W0STV: EOC/ARES**
City EOC going to be permanently set up in the old "sandbox" area.
ARES trailer moved outdoors, power is getting run.
Olmsted EOC radio room getting set up. SkyWarn activity now possible.
Interfacing computers, etc.

- **SkyWarn appreciation last Saturday.** RARC attendance had good representation. Todd Shea is retiring in May 2025.

- **ARES:**
No meeting in December.

Party in Spring Valley with their ARES group Training/Operations center. Meet & Greet. Free food, drinks, prizes. 21st of December, Saturday, 10AM-1PM
147.015 Wykoff repeater talk-in.

- **125Live!**
Program is coming, new licenses! New members will be given the code. HF is sketchy, WIP. VHF is solid. Echo-link: needs static IP. Could run through proxy server. Texas SkyWarn group has spares that we can use.

- **ARES AUXCOM courses.**
ARRL basic courses, etc. Meeting in January to do review + activities.

- **Next month: No meeting, go to the Christmas Party!**
Roosters 2. Starts at 6PM.
Groups.io has our mailing list.

- **Old Business:**
Library is excited about us donating books. We can purchase and donate, they must be beneficial.



RARC MEETING MINUTES

- **Vote for officers:**

All officers have agreed to re-run as current positions. KCOGND casts ballot for the slate. Seconded, approved.

- **Field day:**

Need coordinator for Field Day in June 2025.

- **Proposal to buy \$148 dual-NIC PCs for repeater sites.**

Discussion about better ones. Cap of \$1500 approved for new devices.

Meeting ended 8:57pm



- 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

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

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



Contact RARC

RARC meets the second Tuesday of each month at 6:30 PM (*except the August meeting is the annual RARC club 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 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 on [register](#) 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.

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