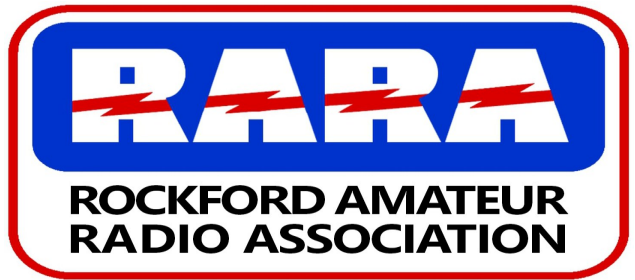


HAMRAG

Visit our website for more club and area ham information at <http://w9axd.org>, or join us on Facebook at this [LINK](#)



RARA Mission Statement

A member association with common interest of public service to the community through the use of amateur radio.

RARA is a volunteer run organization of individuals donating their time each month to develop activities, maintain repeaters, nets, and education. There are associated expenses and when you become a club member, your dues are providing a service to your community and furthering the hobby of amateur radio.

Welcome New Members!

Brian Droy, KD9QVB
Benjamin Hayenga, DK9IVA
Steve Stroschein, W9XF

Congrats to Greg Niles, K9GJN on upgrading to Extra

Thanks to this month's contributors to the Hamrag

Paul Dean, WB9HGZ, David Gauger, W9CJS and
Larry Schubert, AC9GO

Editor's Note

If you would like to have something published, please call me at 815-505-8170, or email me at vernas.kd9yum@gmail.com

Articles are welcome and encouraged from all hams.

Due Date for the May Hamrag is Friday, April 25, 2025



NEXT MEETING

Friday, April 11, 2025 at 7pm

Program: "An Antenna Review", Dave Gauger W9CJS

**OSF St Anthony Med Center—lower level (Foundation Room)
5666 East State Street, Rockford**

After the Meeting Social time at Jerry's Pizza (7403 Argus Drive, Rockford)

April 2025

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Local Events and Information

Tuesday, April 8, 2025 RARA Board Meeting 7:00pm on Google Meet
Friday, April 11, 2025 RARA Membership Meeting 7:00pm OSF St Anthony

2025 RARA Officers and Directors

Officers:

President - Larry McFall, KD9HKX, 815-900-1820, lpmcfall@charter.net
Vice President - Matt Marshall, W3MBX, 815-222-5959, matthew.marshal@gmail.com
Secretary - Joe Perry, K9JPP, 815-2138-3891 K9jppham@gmail.com
Treasurer – Verna Schubert, KD9YUM, 815-505-8170, vernas.kd9yum@gmail.com

Directors:

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Repeater License Trustee - Gordon Seaman, KC9NEX, 815-262-0294, kc9nex@gmail.com
Repeater Chairman - Kurt Eversole, KE9N, 815-389-2784, kurt.eversole@gmail.com

Local Net Information

Mon - 7:00pm - RARA Info. Net & CW Lesson, 147.195 (+0.6) offset, pl 114.8
- 8:00pm - McHenry County RACES Net, 146.835 (-0.6) offset, pl 91.5

Tues - 7:00pm - RARA Tech & Social Net & CW Lesson , 147.195 (+0.6) offset, pl 114.8
- 7:00pm - Rock County Public Service Net, 145.450 (-0.6) offset, pl 123.0

Wed - 7:00pm - RARA Chat Net, 147.195 (+0.6) offset, pl 114.8
- 7:00pm - Stephenson County ARES Net, 147.390(+0.6) offset, pl 114.8
- 7:30pm - Greater Beloit Radio Net, 147.120 (+0.6) offset, pl 123.0

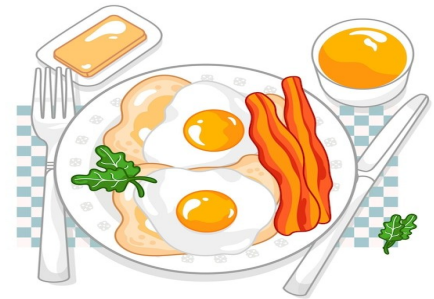
Thu - 7:00pm - Northern Illinois Skywarn Training Net,147.195 (+0.6) offset, pl 114.8

Fri - 8:00pm - Friday Night Fun Net, KC9GCR, 147.195(+0.6) offset, pl 114.8

Sat - 8:00pm - Saturday RARA Ragchew Net, 147.195 (+0.6) offset, pl 114.8
- 8:00pm - Pink Hamsters YL Net, Milw., 146.910 (-0.6) offset, pl 127.3
- 9:00pm - Saturday Night Fun Net Milw., 146.910 (-0.6) offset, pl 127.3

Mon. thru Friday - 8:00am to 9:00am - Senile Net, 14.287 (HF USB)

Local Events and Information



WEEKLY FRIDAY MORNING BREAKFAST

Meets every Friday morning from 7:30 am until about 9:00 am.

We order breakfast at 8:00 am.

An informal gathering of ham folks, no affiliations necessary, good food and good company.

Everyone is welcome to attend.

“The Spring Garden Family Restaurant”

4820 N. 2nd Street

Loves Park, IL 61111

MONTHLY SATURDAY MORNING BREAKFAST

The Greater Beloit Amateur Radio Club (GBARC) meets monthly on the 2nd Saturday of the month at 8:00 a.m.

Denny’s Restaurant

Flying J Truck Stop (IL 75 & 190/39)

All are welcome to join the group for food and lot’s of “ham” talk.

During the warmer weather month’s, a fox-hunt follows breakfast (approximately 10 a.m.).



President's Message– Larry McFall, KD9HKX

Greetings everyone!

For the April meeting we're going back to meeting in-person at St Anthony Medical Center. The club is working on a live stream option for those of you who can't get out to the meeting. It is still "under-construction", so instruction will be forthcoming. Please remember, this is our first attempt and if we have glitches please be patient while we work on getting it right.

We have a few new club members to welcome to RARA; Benjamin Hayenga, KD9IVA, Brian Droy, KD9QDV, and Steve Stroschein, W9XF. This brings our total Club membership for the year to 74 members. It's great having all of you in the club and I look forward to meeting you at one of our various events.

At a recent meeting of the board we discussed the goals of the club as set forth in the club's Constitution. The first goal listed is "*To educate and increase the proficiency of our members in the science of radio communication.*" We discussed how the club tries to reach this goal through programs at our monthly meetings, and getting our members involved in field day operations. The board strives to have programs that educate and are interesting to the membership. To more fully accomplish this, members are encouraged to step up and provide programs to share their interests and knowledge.

Also, if we can help you learn about a topic via some other method (class, group discussion, one on one, etc.), please let us know by contacting any of the board members listed here in the "Hamrag" and talk to them about the things that interest you that you really want to learn more about. It is our firm goal to help each of you expand your knowledge and get more enjoyment from the hobby of amateur radio.

73,

Larry, KD9HKX



To Kurt Eversole, KE9N for all of his time in revamping the RARA membership application. Check it out at the end of the Hamrag!

Celebrating 70 years-RARA History The Rock Valley / RARA Ham Station

In the early 70s, Vito Fiori, K9UCM, RARA member, supporter and advocate and Rock Valley College electronics instructor was instrumental in obtaining permission for RARA to hold its monthly meetings in a well-appointed, comfortable RVC classroom. He would also open the RVC electronics lab for the attendees' inspection during meeting breaks. It was a very modern, well equipped learning facility with state of the art lab gear and test equipment. Vito wanted to build a Ham station at the college, not only for student use, but for use by any interested RARA member. He was able to obtain an educational grant and used it to set up an awe-inspiring station in a corner room on the ground floor of classroom building one.



The station consisted of a top-of-the-line Collins "S-line", complete with station console and dummy load, a Henry 2K linear, a brute of an amplifier, and a TH7DXX Thunderbird tri-band beam on a Ham-M rotor. The station also boasted a dipole for 40 and 80 meters as well as a Regency HR-212 for 2 meters and a solid state RTTY setup (very modern for that time period). This was a magnificent station with the Collins gear alone costing in the neighborhood of 3,600 pre-Jimmy Carter dollars – approximately \$28,000 today.

As thunderstorms threatened RARA Field Day in 1974, which was being held on a back lot of the RVC campus, Vito, without hesitation, opened the Rock Valley station for RARA's Field Day use. We hauled the generator to the walkway between the buildings, ran a cord down the stairs and operated "fixed station, emergency power" that year. FD 1974 was saved!

In the mid-80s, Vito had left Rock Valley for a job in Dayton, Oh. There was no RVC faculty member interested in being responsible for the station. RARA's collective interests were tending towards FM and repeaters at the time, RARA's two "big gun" DXers had moved out of state, so there was also no interest expressed by the RARA membership. RVC decided to turn the station room into a copy center.

The college donated the station equipment to RARA except for the tri-band beam, which had unfortunately fallen victim to the maintenance crew before it could be offered. The beam had been removed, cut into pieces and sent to the landfill. Sad, indeed.

RARA elected to sell the station equipment. When I heard the news, having dreamed since High School of owning a Collins station, I immediately offered to purchase it. My High School dream was fulfilled and RARA's treasury was bettered by a stack of Benjamins! A win-win! To this day, it is still operating every bit as well as the day we first set it up at RVC.

Celebrating 70 years-RARA History The Rock Valley / RARA Ham Station


I have done little maintenance to it over the years, save for having to hit the band switches every now and again with contact cleaner.




Here is the station today. Along the way, I added a second (250 Hz) CW filter in addition to the one it had (500 Hz). I purchased the 30L1 amplifier from Associated Radio in Kansas and the Vibroplex Bug was not part of the original RVC station. Other than that, it looks as it did in classroom building one some 50 plus years ago.

73,
Paul, WB9HGZ



	Paul Franklin, K9RNR 1980
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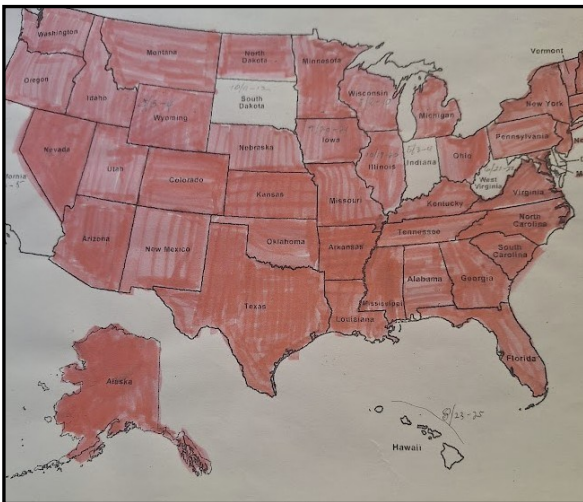
Dean Livingston, WD9FLO 1980	
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Now K9FLO

Measure It! Dave Gauger, W9CJS

In industry there is an old saying ... *“What gets measured, gets done.”* ... why not apply it to improve your Ham Station as well?

Far too often we just string up an antenna, tune the SWR to 1:1 and then complain *that “I don’t work the DX that some of my Ham friends do”*. It’s true that at my location with my equipment I may never equal DX hunters performance, but why not make the best of what I have? Let me suggest a few things that any of us could do that may improve your signal.



You probably have the equipment that you need, right now. Let’s see ... jot this down ... 2 ears ... 2 eyes ... a pencil and paper ... OK so I’m facetious, but it is true that most of us have what we need to do some measuring. Take some data and write it down. Put dots on a USA map showing stations worked. Why not color the states on a map, that you’ve worked this year with a goal toward earning Worked All States this year? On your map you could use different colors for different bands or modes to increase your information.

You probably have an SWR meter ... and your meter may measure power directly. If so, good. Use it for more than just minimizing the reflected power. Are you measuring only 78 watts maximum now, as compared to 98 watts a year ago? Why is that?

Make a chart that includes date, time, band, power and SWR, on each antenna, and then shove it in the drawer ... but ... every so often, pull it out and repeat the same functions. Is your indicated power-out the same? ... Is the SWR the same? ... or ... did you have an internal arc inside your coax feeder... or is moisture creeping into the coax via an unsealed connection?

Perhaps your instrumentation arsenal includes a competent antenna analyzer equipped with a video screen output. Perhaps you have a mini VNA which produces visual Smith Charts. This is good but have you explored what all that these instruments tell you? Perhaps someone in RARA would be willing to help you get the most from the data these sophisticated instruments provide.

Measure It! Dave Gauger, W9CJS

BASE-LINE

When you visit your new doctor he does base-line measurements ... recording your age, your weight, your known medical history, your blood pressure and chemistry and so on. This, so that if you have a medical problem later, he can look for changes which help in diagnosing what may be the best cure. It's the same thing with your radio. I suggest that we do some simple measurements like using the Reverse Beacon Network.

With a known rig, antenna, power and mode, get some readings ... send CQ in CW ... no, we don't have to be truly code-conversant .. just send CQ three times and your call a couple times on CW. Then go to the website reversebeacon.net and specify your call. Voila! Up will come a list of "Skimmer Stations" who have heard you. They report your signal strength, your code speed, the local time and your frequency all in chart form. Print it out and you have a base line for future comparison. We even have a Ham-Breakfast member who runs a skimmer.

Why not use an A-B switch to compare your G5RV to your 4BTV vertical. The Reverse Beacon Network is a great help here.

Yes, band conditions make a difference, but suppose you see that Skimmers south of you consistently report louder signals than those east or west of you. Now you're beginning to learn the directionality of your dipole or vertical (yes, vertical, you may be surprised) I use a MagLoop and with the loop oriented northeast, supposedly to maximize in this direction. But I work many more stations to the southeast and get far better reports. Who knows why, but it's a known pattern and I wouldn't have known without putting "dots on a map".

Dave Larsen, N9ZXL gave me a map of the U.S. with each of the 50 states outlined. Now, when I work a station, I put a black dot at that approximate location on the map. It very clearly corroborates the fact that my MagLoop is doing a better job to the side than in the plane of the loop as theory dictates. Why? I may never know, but if I want to call a DX station, I'll know best how to orient the antenna.

My opening sentence quoted, "*What gets measured get's done*" ... so what can you do to evaluate your station's performance without spending a ton of money? Record some station data for later use.



At the very least you have a good conversation topic for the Ham-Breakfast.

Dave Gauger, W9CJS

Did You Know?

The American Radio Relay League (ARRL) offers a **Free Student Membership for full-time students aged 21 years or younger**. Applicants must reside in the U.S., its possessions, or Puerto Rico. This membership provides access to various benefits, such as digital versions of ARRL magazines and training materials, though it excludes voting rights and some services.

Here's how to apply:

- ◆ Visit the [ARRL Student Membership page](#) to access the application form.
- ◆ Ensure you meet the eligibility criteria:
 - Full-time student, aged 21 or younger
 - Reside in the U.S., its possessions, or Puerto Rico
- ◆ Complete the application form with your details. Parental/guardian consent is required for applications under 18.
- ◆ Submit the form online or via the provided instructions.

License Fee Reimbursement

ARRL also offers a reimbursement program to cover the cost of obtaining an amateur radio license. The ARRL's Youth Licensing Grant Program covers the \$35 FCC application fee for new amateur radio license candidates under 18 years old. To qualify, the exam must be administered through the ARRL Volunteer Examiner Coordinator (VEC) program. After the license is issued, the payer can submit a reimbursement form to receive the refund.

Here's how to apply:

- ◆ Visit the [Youth Licensing Grant Program page](#) for detailed instructions and the reimbursement form.
- ◆ Take your amateur radio license exam through the ARRL Volunteer Examiner Coordinator (VEC) program.
- ◆ Pay the \$35 FCC application fee and a reduced \$5 exam session fee (for candidates under 18).
- ◆ Once your license is issued, complete the reimbursement form and submit it to the ARRL VEC. You can upload it online, email it, or send it by fax or mail.
- ◆ The reimbursement check will be mailed to the fee payer listed on the form.

I Got My License! Now What?

Article courtesy of Ham Radio School, Bob Witte KØNR author. HamRadioSchool.com

It seems that when people are studying for their ham radio Technician license exam, they understandably get very focused on learning the material and passing the FCC exam. Suddenly, the Volunteer Examiner tells them “you passed” and the thrill of success bursts forth!

This is sometimes followed by the question: I got my license, now what?

The most general answer to this question is “find something you are interested in doing and do it.” For many new hams, this is easy— they just need to think about what got them interested in ham radio and follow that path. But other folks have this basic idea that they “want to do ham radio” but may not be sure how to actually get started. This article is to give you some ideas on what to do, assuming you have a Tech license and some basic 2m or 70 cm radio equipment.

If you haven’t already connected up with some local radio hams, give that a try. Having someone to talk to about various ham radio activities can really help. If you have a radio club in the area, be sure to connect up with them and attend a meeting. (See the ARRL listing of ham radio clubs.)

Here are some ideas for radio activity to help get you started (in no particular order):

Public Service

Often people get interested in amateur radio to provide a service to the community. There are many opportunities to get involved in helping out with events such as walkathons, marathons, bike races, etc. Communications support may be provided by a ham radio club or, more likely, the local [Amateur Radio Emergency Service](#) (ARES) group. The [Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service](#) (RACES) is another public service organization, normally associated with a governmental agency such as the county sheriffs department. Sometimes ARES and RACES are combined into one group. The ARRL has a web page that compares the two organizations.

Most ARES and RACES groups have some kind of “registration database” for you to sign up. However, it usually works best to reach out and find the local hams that are in charge of these groups and let them know you are interested. Find out when they hold their meetings and on-the-air nets and join in. Make yourself visible and available.

Emergency Communications

Often I hear new hams say they are interested in emergency communications or as the ARRL says When All Else Fails. They’ve heard about or experienced landline and mobile phones getting overloaded during blizzards, hurricanes and wildfires and want to have alternative communications. The prepper community refers to this as SHTF.

I Got My License! Now What?

Article courtesy of Ham Radio School, Bob Witte KØNR author. HamRadioSchool.com

Being prepared for emergencies boils down to two basic questions: 1) what are the conditions that you are preparing for? 2) who do you want to communicate with? Most likely, you need to be ready for a power outage of some duration, which implies the use of battery backup or a gasoline generator to power your radio equipment. Who you want to communicate with varies from just your immediate family over short distances to being able to contact other hams much further away. Thinking through the answers to these two questions will get you started on creating the desired communication capability.

Find A VHF/UHF Repeater

Another way to connect with the local amateur radio community is via VHF/UHF repeaters. These things are the utility mode for communicating locally. Take a look at [How to Choose a Repeater](#) for some tips on finding a repeater that works for you. [Introduction to VHF/UHF Repeaters](#) provides an excellent overview of how repeaters work.

Develop Your Home Station

Many hams start out with a VHF/UHF handheld transceiver (HT), which gets them on the air quickly. This really is a ham shack in your hand, which is useful for many activities. By itself, the HT has limited range, so many hams are interested in extending its range. One thing you can do is attached an external antenna to the HT to give it greater radio coverage (see [Considering a VHF/UHF Antenna for Your Home?](#)). This will increase your simplex range and allow you to hit more distant repeaters. Another thing to consider is establishing a VHF/UHF home base station (see [A VHF FM Station at Home](#)), which provides more output power to increase coverage.

Single Sideband on VHF

While the majority of VHF operating is using FM, there is a whole 'nuther world out there in the weak-signal operating modes. We call this "weak signal" since we are often pulling signals out of the noise to make a contact. Signal Sideband (SSB) is the preferred voice mode when signals are weak since FM performs poorly when the signal level drops. You'll also find quite a bit of Morse Code CW (Continuous Wave) communication used since it is even better than SSB when the signals are weak. To play with SSB, you need an all-mode transceiver that operates on VHF such as the [Yaesu FT-857D](#) or [FT-817ND](#). You'll also need to get a suitable antenna, one that is horizontally polarized and probably a yagi antenna with gain.



Stu WØSTU operates SSB from a mountaintop using his portable VHF station.

See these related articles:

- ◆ [SSB on 2-meters: The other VHF mode](#)
- ◆ [Getting Started on 2-Meter SSB](#)
- ◆ [Single Sideband Advantages](#)

I Got My License! Now What?

Article courtesy of Ham Radio School, Bob Witte KØNR author. HamRadioSchool.com

The 6m band is known as The Magic Band because it can suddenly come alive with signals bouncing off sporadic-e clouds in the ionosphere. On most days, 6 meters acts like any other VHF band with mostly local propagation. But when the sporadic-e hits (very common in the summer months), you can talk across North America. When the normal sunspot cycle is strong, we can also get F2 propagation, which allows contacts to be made into Europe, South America and Asia. Learn more about VHF over-the-horizon propagation with this article: [10m, 6m, 2m Over-the-Horizon Propagation](#)

Space Contacts

Another great use of the 2m and 70 cm bands is to contact outer space. The International Space Station (ISS) has a ham radio station on board and most of the astronauts have their amateur radio license ([see ARISS](#)). The primary use of this station is for contacts with schools as part of NASA education outreach mission. However, the astronauts sometimes decide to make contacts on their own time. It really depends on the interests of the astronaut and a few of them have really gotten into making random ham radio contacts. Also, very often there is a packet radio station transmitting from the ISS such that you can "digipeat" through the station to contact other hams on earth. It is even a fun exercise to see if you can successfully track the ISS and then hear the packet station transmitting. The ISS is in low earth orbit (LEO), so it is usually overhead for only 10 minutes or so, depending on the pass.

Another type of space operation is using OSCAR ([Orbiting Satellite Carrying Amateur Radio](#)) satellites, which are basically repeaters in the sky. These satellites are also in LEO so you repeat through them to contact other hams while you both have the satellite within range. Some of these satellites use FM, so you can work through them using just a dualband (2m/70cm) HT and a small yagi antenna. It does take a bit of study and practice to track the satellites, figure out the right frequency, point the antenna and adjust for doppler shift. But that is what makes it a fun learning experience and radio challenge. See the [AMSAT web site](#) for more information, and check out this Ham Radio School article: [Amateur Satellite Contacts](#). For a summary video on satellite ops, see WØSTU's "Satellite Operations" video in Chapter 11 Space Contacts of the [Technician Learning media page](#).

Summits On The Air

The Summits On The Air (SOTA) program is a great combination of hiking and portable ham radio operating. The basic idea of SOTA is to operate from a designated list of summits or to work other radio operators when they activate the summits. The designated summits are assigned scoring points based on elevation with scoring systems for both activators (radio operators on a summit) and chasers (radio operators working someone on a summit).

A basic VHF SOTA station is a handheld FM transceiver with a ½-wave telescoping antenna. The standard rubber duck on a handheld transceiver (HT) is generally a poor radiator so using a ½-wave antenna is a huge improvement. Just stuff the HT and antenna in a backpack along with the usual hiking essentials and head for the summit. [See How To Do a VHF SOTA Activation](#).

I Got My License! Now What?

Article courtesy of Ham Radio School, Bob Witte KØNR author. HamRadioSchool.com

Packet Radio and APRS

Some new hams are interested in digital communications via amateur radio. This is a great way to blend computer technology and radio communications. There are many ways to do this but packet radio is one of the most common on the VHF/UHF bands. Simply put, packet radio uses relatively slow speed modem tones (1200 or 9600 baud) fed into an FM transceiver using a Terminal Node Controller (TNC). The transmissions are in “packet form” using the AX.25 protocol, which is handled by the TNC. Think of it as “SMS text messaging before there was text messaging.”

One of the most common usages of AX.25 packet is the [Automatic Packet Reporting System](#) (APRS). APRS is quite versatile but the most common use is position reporting, with a robust set of internet-based mapping tools to plot the position of a particular ham radio stations. For example, the figure to the right shows the track of Steve WG0AT as he ascended a SOTA mountaintop in Colorado.

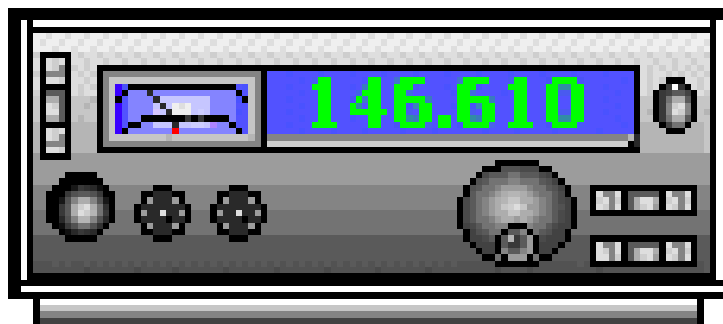
Work the High Frequency Bands

I’ve mostly given examples of VHF/UHF operating, but a Technician license does give you some useful operating privileges on the High Frequency (HF) bands. In particular, Techs have voice privileges on 10 meters (28.3 to 28.5 MHz). When the sunspots are active, 10m is an awesome worldwide DX band. You literally can talk around the world. To do this, you’ll need a transceiver capable of SSB on the 10m band and a suitable antenna. The antenna does not have to be exotic — a simple dipole or 1/4-wave vertical can do well.

If you get hooked on the fun of HF DX, then you’ll want to start working on your General Class License. But that is a topic for another day.

-- Bob KØNR

Check out more on [Ham Radio School here](#)



Hamfests, Contest and DX Links

Hamfests and Swapfests in
Northern IL, Northwest IN, and
Southern WI

AMATEUR RADIO EVENTS



THE HAM RADIO COMMUNITY IN ACTION!

Thanks to K9MSG, Kirk Musselman—

No more struggling to find local foxhunts, hamfests, public service/volunteer events and more. **Over 50 events** are all in one place including maps, descriptions, contact links, costs, and more. And, we just added a *Guide for Amateur Radio Volunteers* and a list of worldwide *Amateur Radio History Events* which you can join remotely.

The site will keep updating and expanding to carry more types of events (training, POTA, etc.) so bookmark the site and join us as we bring event organizers and amateur radio operators together to grow the amateur radio community. Please use the contact page to share suggestions, updates, additions, or comments.

WA7BNM Contest
Calendar

Powered by ICOM

Link to the WA7BNM Contest Calendar

Want to see what's new in the world of DX? Select the link below and make sure you check out the weekly bulletins!

Powered by ICOM

DX WORLD.net

This and That

RARA members—please be sure the email address you provide is one you check regularly to make sure you receive club updates and the monthly Hamrag.

Also, don't forget to let us know if there are changes to your email or phone number, ARRL membership status, or call sign.



If you are interested in becoming a weather spotter here are helpful links, including the training calendar.

Below is a link to the 2025 NWS Chicago Spring Training Sessions. There are two virtual trainings in April.

[2025 NWS Chicago Spring Training Sessions](#)

Save the date!

Swap Fest— Sunday, May 18, 2025, 9am—noon

Rain or Shine.

Please note the new location!

Hononegah Forest Preserve (Site of last fall's RARA Family Picnic)

80 Hononegah Road, Rockton IL

No sponsor, No admission, No vendors, No VE testing!

Just a bunch of hams getting together to swap stuff and socialize.

Please direct questions to Larry Lisle, K9KZT

L.lisle@usa.net or 2 meter nets

Following the Swap Fest; Planning is underway for an afternoon education event in collaboration with the Greater Beloit Amateur Radio Club.

Participants will build their own tape measure antenna

(basically a simple, hand-held 2-meter Yagi) often used for foxhunts.

Weather permitting, plans are to hold mini foxhunt so you can put your new antenna to work and learn more about this fun radio activity.

Details will be completed soon and more information will be provided.

Upcoming Exams

Looking to upgrade or know someone looking for a testing location?

More information available at ARRL.org

[Click here](#) for link to VE Teams offering Online Exam Sessions

MUST HAVE FRN AHEAD OF EXAM

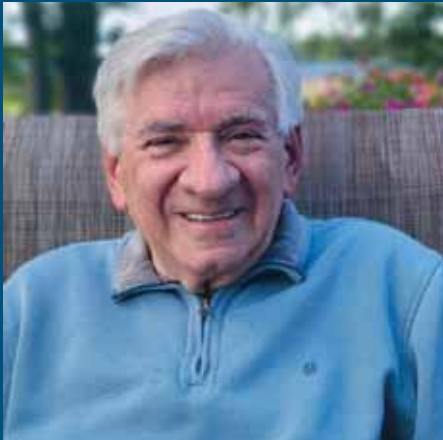
- **04/26/2025 | [Milwaukee WI 53223-4736](#)**
Sponsor: MRAC VEC, INC
Location: Ham Radio Outlet
Time: 9:30 AM (Walk-ins allowed) [Learn More](#)
- **05/03/2025 | [Madison WI 53715-2143](#)**
Sponsor: Four Lakes ARC
Location: Univ of WI Space Place
Time: 8:00 AM (Walk-ins allowed) [Learn More](#)
- **05/03/2025 | [Schaumburg IL 60194](#)**
Sponsor: Schaumburg ARC
Location: Schaumburg Park Dist Community Rec Center
Time: 9:00 AM (No Walk-ins / Register or Call ahead) [Learn More](#)
- **05/10/2025 | [McHenry IL 60050-4422](#)**
Sponsor: NW IL S WI Amrron
Location: McHenry Masonic Lodge
Time: 10:00 AM (Walk-ins allowed) [Learn More](#)
- **05/17/2025 | [Janesville WI 53545-3024](#)**
Sponsor: Wisconsin Area VEs (WAVE)
Location: Saint John Lutheran Church
Time: 1:00 PM (No Walk-ins / Register or Call ahead) [Learn More](#)

Teaching the Butterflies to Fly in Formation

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LAST WORD

Larry Schubert, AC9GO



Longtime ham Larry Schubert, AC9GO, is interested in all technologies. When not on the air, Larry enjoys writing about the hobby, and spending time with his wife Verna who, after 30 years of marriage, became KD9YUM.

The first time trying almost anything — a first date, the first time playing a new sport, the first time speaking in front of a group of people — can be a harrowing experience for many of us. In ham radio, there’s a particular first-time fear, known as “mic fright,” that can keep people from getting on the air. I met a guy who had been a General-class license holder for over 13 years, and he had never been on the air — that’s some strong mic fright!

My own experience with mic fright came when I took a job as morning DJ at a small station in Huntington, Indiana. I was so scared that I clammed up every time someone walked into the studio. My boss asked one of the engineers to record me. He played the tape back to me. I sounded like I was whispering! I told him I would work on it. I had a small tape recorder and a microphone, and practiced doing play-by-play announcing for three or four local basketball games a week for the next month, recording myself every time. With time and practice, I got over my mic fright, and anyone I worked with after that would probably tell you that I was one of the most laid-back radio announcers that they ever met.

The point is, don’t be surprised if you have mic fright — or even “key fright,” if you go on the air with CW. It’s perfectly natural. Here’s a secret: That fear is nature’s way of getting your heart pumping, and getting you ready to take on the unknown. The Toastmasters organization will tell you that if you’re nervous about making a speech, you don’t want to get rid of the stomach butterflies, but you do want to teach them to fly in formation.

In your first weeks and months on the air, go ahead and mention that you’re new. Hams like to talk to a new ham, welcome them to ham radio community, and congratulate them for passing the exam. Once you’ve gotten on the air for the first time, you’ll be on your way to getting over your mic fright, and enjoying ham radio. That first time on the air will be added to your list of first-ever experiences in life. Make it memorable, and have fun!

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website: w9axd.org
email: w9axdrara@gmail.com

RARA Membership* Form

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Can we release your e-mail and phone number to members only? Yes No

Are you a member of the ARRL (American Radio Relay League)? Yes No

(check all boxes that apply to the following questions)

What type of equipment do you own? Base Mobile Handheld
What band capabilities do you have? HF VHF UHF
What are your favorite operating modes? Voice CW PSK31 FT4/FT8 SSTV
What club activities can you help with? Field Day Hamfest Special Event
Can you operate under emergency power? Yes No
How did you hear about RARA? Other Member Internet Friend Listening on air

I would like to learn more about: Weather Spotting & Skywarn POTA Other (list below)

Other Comments:

***Membership is based on approval of the RARA Board. The membership fee will be returned if you are not approved.**