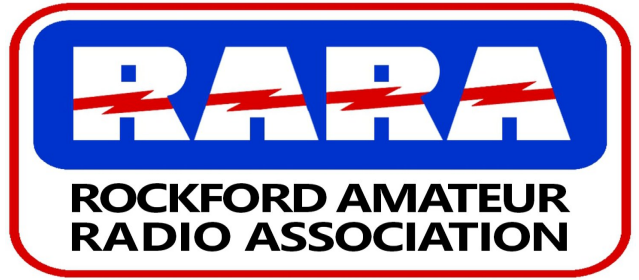


HAMRAG

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 to New RARA Members:

Mike Cichonski KE9DSK
Jon Fast KI9DX

Congratulations to:

Allan Levandowski on his Technician, KB9ETC

Thanks to this month's contributors to the Ham Rag

Kerry Tatlow KD9MAP 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 w9yum.vs@gmail.com
Articles are welcome and encouraged from all hams.

Due Date for the February Ham Rag is Wed January 28, 2026

NEXT MEETING

FRIDAY— February 13, 2026 - 7:00pm

**Program: 3-D Printing presented by
The Ham Radio Dude, Sean Klechak W9FFF
follow him at <https://www.youtube.com/@DudeTested>**

This will be a Virtual Meeting on Google Meet
A link will be emailed to members on Friday morning of the meeting

January 2026



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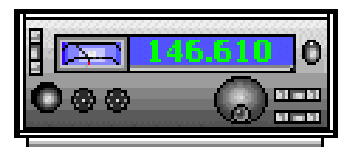
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President's Message– Larry McFall, KD9HKX

Happy New Year to all members and friends of RARA:

I hope all of you had a happy and joyful holiday season. It is surreal to me that it is 2026 and it's been almost 10 years since I got my first ham radio license. Over the last 10 years I've been very grateful that this hobby gives me something new to learn everyday and our club has been instrumental in the learning process. Hopefully we will all help to make this year as interesting as last year because we all have something to contribute.

Winter field day for this year is January 24th and 25th. Winter field day is organized by the Winter Field Day Association. Winter field day was organized in mid 2006 and the first winter field day was in January of 2007. The aim of the event is to improve amateur radio preparedness for disasters and enhance the operational abilities of ham operators in adverse conditions. The event is held on HF, VHF, and UHF and can employ voice, CW, and digital transmissions. While RARA is not participating as a club several of our members will be joining the greater Beloit amateur radio club WFD event. Anyone may also participate as a solo operator or in a small group of operators. You can find more information at:

<https://winterfieldday.org/index.php>

Thank you to all of our members who have renewed their membership for 2026 and if you haven't yet renewed please do so during January.

73's to all,
Larry KD9HKX

RARA Board and Local Nets

Tuesday, February 10, 2026 RARA Board Meeting 7:00pm on Google Meet
Friday, February 13, 2026 RARA Membership Meeting 7:00pm Google Meet

2026 RARA Officers and Directors

Officers:

President - Larry McFall, KD9HKX, 815-900-1820, lpmcfall@charter.net
Vice President - Jamie Cook, W9JTC, 779-423-9054, W9JTC@yahoo.com
Secretary - Guy Adams, KE9CZZ, 815-985-8554, ke9czz@gmail.com
Treasurer - Verna Schubert, W9YUM, 815-505-8170, w9yum.vs@gmail.com

Directors:

Jimmy Curtis, KC9GOL, 779-537-2233, jimhcurtis7818@yahoo.com
Dan Larson, KD9SAZ, 312-292-1989, kd9saz@gmail.com
Doug Passmore, KE9CNS, 815-979-9229, dgpasmore@att.net
Mike Richardson, KB9SSV, 815-616-0200, kb9ssv@msn.com
Hamrag Editor - Verna Schubert, W9YUM, 815-505-8170, w9yum.vs@gmail.com
Webmaster - Verna Schubert, W9YUM, 815-505-8170, w9yum.vs@gmail.com
Repeater License Trustee - Doug Passmore, KE9CNS, 815-979-9229, dgpasmore@att.net
Repeater Chairman - Matt Marshall, W3MBX, 815-222-5959, matthew.marshall@gmail.com

Local Net Information

Mon - 7:00pm - RARA Info. Net & CW Lesson, 146.610 (-0.6) offset, pl 114.8
- 8:00pm - McHenry County RACES Net, 146.835 (-0.6) offset, pl 91.5

Tues - 7:00pm - RARA Tuesday Night Net & CW Lesson, 146.610 (-0.6) offset, pl 114.8
- 7:30pm - Rock County Public Service Net, 145.450 (-0.6) offset, pl 123.0

Wed - 7:00pm - Wed Night Chat Net, 146.610 (-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, 146.610 (-0.6) offset, pl 114.8

Sat - 8:00pm - RARA Ragchew Net, 146.610 (-0.6) offset, pl 114.8
- 8:00pm - Pink Hamsters YL Net, Milwaukee 146.910 (-0.6) offset, pl 127.3
- 9:00pm - Saturday Night Fun Net Milwaukee 146.910 (-0.6) offset, pl 127.3

Mon. thru Friday - 8:00am to 9:00am - Senile Net, WD9BB, 14.287 (HF USB)

Save the Date!

Saturday, January 24, 2026 10:00am
Winnebago County Skywarn—Public Information Meeting



OSF St. Anthony Med Center—Foundation Room (ground/cafeteria level)
5666 East State St, Rockford

Learn more about the NEW Winnebago County Skywarn/Emergency Services

This meeting is for all interested in storm spotting and how to participate

Visit www.winnebagocountyskywarn.com

Sunday, May 3, 2026 (7am –1pm)

Dekalb Hamfest

Sponsored by the Kishwaukee Amateur Radio Club

Flyer with more information is included in the Hamrag

Sat June 27 - Sun June 28, 2026

ARRL Summer Field Day

This annual event is always held on the **fourth Full weekend in June**. Please get it on your calendar as a lot of help is needed for a successful and fun event! More information will be provided as we get closer to the event.

Stay Tuned!

Upcoming Date Not Yet Determined

Spring POTA Hangout! Rock Cut State Park

Are you one of the RARA members that expressed interest in POTA on your membership form? Well...stay “tuned” for an educational and fun event. John Alcock NG9M, one of RARA’s resident POTA gurus will demonstrate how it works from setup to getting you on the air—antenna options, spotting, logging, working a pile up!

Spring Swap Meet

Coordinated by Larry Lisle K9KZT

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

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

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 Ham Rag.

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

Please email updates to Verna W9YUM at w9yum.vs@gmail.com & add me to your contacts.

This and That

Thank you!
I would like to thank the RARA group for
the Ham of the Year Award given to me.
I will work hard to be deserving of it.
Thank you again—Jim Curtis KC9GOL

This is a great club. I wish I could be there
to attend meetings more often. Keep up
the great work!
Thank you! Steve Fleming KA9ZCF



RARA member Paul (WB9HGZ) and his wife Eileen (WD9EIA) made time for lunch while traveling from Virginia to visit family for the holidays. Kurt KE9N, Larry AC9GO, Verna W9YUM, and Larry KD9HKX joined them for lunch and had a very nice visit and shared lots of radio stories. They are hoping to make it back our way in the fall!

Celebration and Recognition

The December 2025 meeting was a great time of fellowship, snacking, prizes, and time to recognize individuals working hard throughout the year to keep the RARA Signal Strong!



THANK YOU

With thanks for their contributions to the monthly meeting program and education of members.



Left to right: Kurt Eversole KE9N, Daniel Larson KD9SAZ, David Gauger W9CJS, Matt Marshall W3MBX, and Larry McFall KD9HKX. Not present John Alcock N9GM and Greg Niles K9GJN

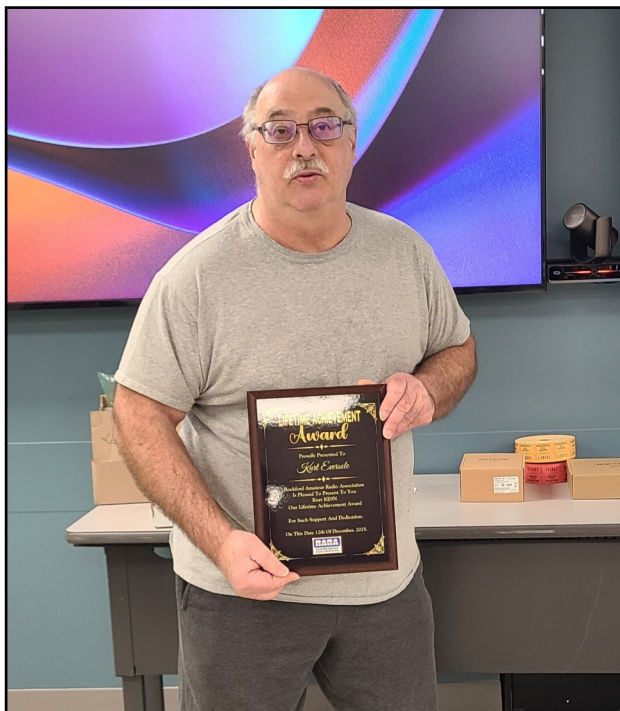
Celebration and Recognition

Also recognized were other individuals receiving nominations for Ham of the Year.

*Pictured are:
Daniel Larson KD9SAZ and Verna Schubert W9YUM
Dan Hunt N9DCH (not present)*



Special Lifetime Achievement Award Kurt Eversole KE9N



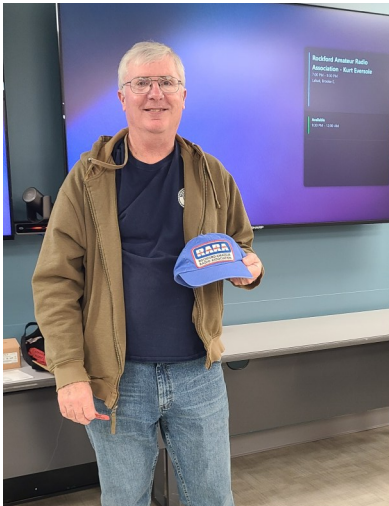
Kurt was visibly surprised and deeply moved when the award was announced—he was momentarily at a loss for words. Although he has previously received the Ham of the Year award multiple times, the RARA Board chose to honor him with its Lifetime Achievement Award.

Over the years, Kurt has shown unwavering dedication to RARA and the broader amateur radio community. His leadership, educational efforts, and tireless hard work have been invaluable. While his many contributions are too numerous to list here, this recognition is richly deserved.

In Celebration - Prizes

Congratulations to the prize drawing winners!

The two Ailunce HT prizes (one for amateur and one for GMRS) were possible by the generous donation made by JJK Communications www.jjkcom.com—thank you!



Left: Greg Kuczek W9VOX
Winner of RARA Hat



Right: Guy Adams KE9CZZ
Winner of \$20 RARA Store
Gift Certificate



Winner of the Ailunce Amateur HT
Larry Schubert AC9GO



Winner of the Ailunce GMRS HT
David Kiefer KC9OWB

From the Workbench by Larry AC9GO



Welcome to 2026! Congratulations, you made it. I say that for all the older hams like myself that never expected to make it this far, but I'm glad that I have. The thing is if you have lived as long as I have you have probably seen a lot of things change in ham radio as in other things in the world. In the fifties when I got my first license there were just a few modes of communication. For the most part hams used CW or AM voice. Single Side Band was just getting underway and you could hear a lot of fights on the air about SSB causing so much interference that the AM group was up in arms so to speak. SSB was said to be much more effective than AM but it sounded more like Donald Duck at the time.

Fast forward to today when digital communications seems to be the one causing the static and at times is blamed for interference. Ah yes, the more things are different, the more they stay the same. At this time I don't think there is much of a problem, and digital really doesn't seem to be something that people are fighting to adapt, at least on HF, but who can say what will happen 5 or 10 years from now.

The last couple of weeks I've been trying something different on my Tuesday night net. It isn't new really but I've put emphasis on trying to help solve problems for some of the hams in the area. Last week Mark KE9COB brought up the problem he was having with interference to a neighbor's radio. I was glad to hear a number of the hams offered some really good ideas for him, and he thinks that the problem has been solved. He isn't sure because his neighbor has yet to answer his phone calls.

There has been a lot said and written about grounding a ham radio station, and a number of experts have weighed in on the problem. Unfortunately, a lot of the information out there is so diverse that it can't all be right. I can tell you that if you drive in two ground rods any distance apart that there can be a difference electrically, and the difference can cause a ground loop. I helped people trouble shoot problems with a system that controlled plastic making machines all over the world, and many of the problems were caused by a ground loop. It doesn't take much of a difference in a system that is measuring millivolts in thermocouples and pressure gauges, to cause problems. Mark's main problem seems to have been a ground loop caused by tying a ground rod for the house wiring to the ground rod for lightning protection. He said that after he disconnected the wire he was no longer interfering with his own portable radio.

I am going to take a little time to do some investigation on what the powers to be are saying is the right way to ground a Ham radio station. When I get some information worth sharing, I'll let you know. In the mean time, if you have a problem bring it to the Tuesday night net. No problem is too big or too small.

Have fun with your radio! 73 and Happy New Year. Larry AC9GO

Six Years of HF DXing, by KD9MAP Jan 8 2026

I reentered the ham radio hobby in retirement, getting relicensed on Nov 19, 2018. I spent the first year doing a lot of listening, building stuff, VHF phone, and beaconing QRP HF using WSPR mode, relying entirely on WSPRNet automatically doing my logging.

On Dec 22, 2019, I began operating HF in earnest and personally logging all my two-way contacts. I've logged mostly FT8 contacts, with a bit of SSB and CW in there.

In the six years since, I've logged 17,139 contacts in 173 countries, with 14,847 confirmed contacts in 155 countries, with a pretty consistent confirmation rate of 87% overall. This represents 16,419 total unique callsigns worked, with 5,519 of them outside the USA. Within the USA, I've logged confirmed contacts in all states, and in 1,812 US counties. Over the entire globe, I've logged confirmed contacts in 1,474 grid squares.

All that operating was done in 1,117 separate sessions, totaling 2,113 hours of actual ass-in-chair time, a little less than two-hours per session on average. I've seen Solar Cycle 25 progress from dead air to peak frenzy and am now watching it waning. It's been a great ride! Lots of excitement and lots of learning.

My HF operating style is to work only stations I've not worked before. I don't care where they are, as long as they're new. I avoid calling CQ for that reason; whenever I've called CQ, I get a bunch of stations I've already worked, which is of course welcome, but not my aligned with my goals. So my main style is to answer other new stations' CQ's, and especially to pounce them when I hear them 73 their prior contact.

If I hear DX, I work it preferentially, but I don't expend a whole lot of effort chasing it. I prefer working stations I can hear well, and who can hear me well. DXing doesn't have to mean 'always digging faint signals out of noise, with lots of repeat sending.' Unless I really desperately want a particular contact, I won't invest much time in trying to raise him, or sitting in pile-ups. On FT8, there is *always abundant fresh traffic* to choose from, always another station you can work if the present QSO isn't succeeding. The length of FT8 QSOs is usually a short 75-90 seconds, and I like and rely upon the high availability and predictability of brief, successful contacts.

I guess I've never understood why operators get on the air and call "CQ DX." I say: if you can hear DX, work it. If you can't hear DX, it's not because they're waiting around idly for a US station to call "CQ DX." *The DX is always "there;"* the only thing that changes is *whether you can hear it or not.* If you can't hear it, switch bands, and try different times of day, until you can hear it. Then work it.

Six Years of HF DXing, by KD9MAP Jan 8 2026

The DX you can hear depends on the band you choose, space weather, where you are in the solar cycle, time of day, and annual seasonality. Vary your operating session bands and times to experiment with all those variables, and you'll find the DX. You can use online tools like VOACAP for cycle year/seasonality/time of day DX predictions by country, and sites like NOAA's Space Weather Enthusiasts Dashboard to get current space weather conditions. But in the end, the main thing to rely upon is what you are actually hearing on the air at any given time. Sometimes there's great DX during sucky space weather, and sometimes there's the exact opposite :)

The more bands you can work, the more success you'll have. I use two EFHW multibanders, a 10-40 and a 10-80. Every antenna you use will have a different propagation 'footprint;' I find that if I can't work a 15m station on the 10-40 antenna, I might be able to work it using the 10-80. So multiple antennas can help too.

As this solar cycle wanes, I anticipate getting fewer new contacts per hour of operating time, along with fewer new countries and grid squares. The higher bands will die, so I'll be putting my antenna construction efforts into lower-band antennas. Even at the bottom of the cycle, I'll be able to collect new North American stations, grid squares and US counties, if not a lot of overseas DX, on bands 30-80, with groundwave magic.

If you are an HF operator, you are invited to check in with the Friday Night Fun Net, where we have a DX corner in which *any and all HF operating experiences* can be shared and discussed. Please don't be shy; join in! I think we have many local hams who are doing *fine business HF*, but we haven't heard them talking about it on the Fun Net yet. We need you there :)

From Freeport Illinois:

The Friday Night Fun Net with Jimmy Dorsey, KC9GCR

Every Friday at 8PM Central Time
K9RFD Repeater 147.195, Rockford Illinois

Live Streamed on the
Kerry Tatlow YouTube Channel

[Link Here to Kerry's YouTube Channel](#)

Hamfest, Contest and DX Links

Hamfests and Swapfests in Northern IL, Northwest IN, and Southern WI **Click the link**

AMATEUR RADIO EVENTS

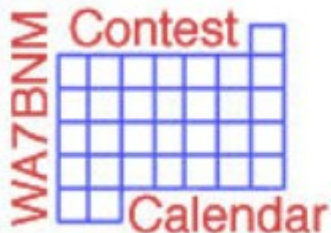


THE HAM RADIO COMMUNITY IN ACTION!

Thanks to K9MSG, Kirk Musselman— www.amateurradioevents.com or use link above

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.



Powered by ICOM

Link to the **WA7BNM Contest Calendar** or go to www.contestcalendar.com

Want to see what's new in the world of DX? Select the link below and make sure you check out the weekly bulletins or go to www.dxworld.net

Powered by ICOM

DX WORLD.net

DeKalb Hamfest



The DeKalb Hamfest



Sponsored by the Kishwaukee Amateur Radio Club
 Sunday...May 3, 2026... Front Gate 7 am to 1:00 pm
 Vendor/Tailgate Setup—Saturday 1 PM to 9 PM
 and Sunday 6 AM to 8 AM via Back Gate
 \$8.00 Advance Ticket (Double-Stub—See Below)
 \$10.00 Adm at the gate -No Large Bills (Single Stub).

Overnight Camping on Fairgrounds \$25 per night—
 Includes Electric and Sewer

Rain or Shine
2 Lg Unheated Bldgs
3 Cash Prizes
Prize Drawings Every
Half Hour

Free Outside Tailgating
No VE Testing
Chairs not provided
No Valet Parking
You Unload/Re-Load
Carts not Provided

Food Vendor: Hyvee
Fairground Regulations
Prohibit Vehicles in
buildings



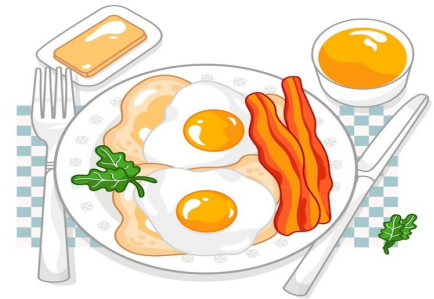
Always the First Sunday in May. May 3, 2026
Sandwich Fairgrounds, Sandwich, IL
(Just North of RT. 34 Intersection of SUYDAM and GLETTY Roads)
TALK-IN: KARC Repeater 146.730 pl=100 (-) or 146.52 Simplex
****** ATTENDEES USE MAIN GATE ONLY ******

????????????? **Questions** ??????????????
Phone: Bob Yurs—W9ICU—Hamfest Chairman at 815-757-3219
Or e-mail bob@w9icu.us
KARC Hamfest Webpage / Hotel Info: www.karc-club.org

Return to: KARC, PO Box 371, DeKalb, IL 60115
Deadline: April 20, 2026 MUST INCLUDE SASE FOR ADVANCE TICKET SALES

Advance Tickets will not be for sale on site
 _____ **ADVANCE TICKETS @ \$8 each (Dual Stubs)**
 _____ **INSIDE TABLES @ \$10 each (FREE TAILGATING)**
 _____ **Total...Please make checks payable to KARC**
 _____ **Telephone Number** _____ **e-mail address**
 _____ **Call Sign**

Local Ham Breakfasts



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.



The RARA Store—Time for Fall Items!

The RARA Store has been very well received. Thanks to all of you purchasing shirts, hats, mugs, and more. RARA receives a commission on each purchase made, what better way to promote RARA and your enthusiasm for amateur radio, all while supporting your club and local business!

To access the store, scan the QR-code below or select this link  [SHOP RARA STORE](https://stores.inksoft.com/rara)

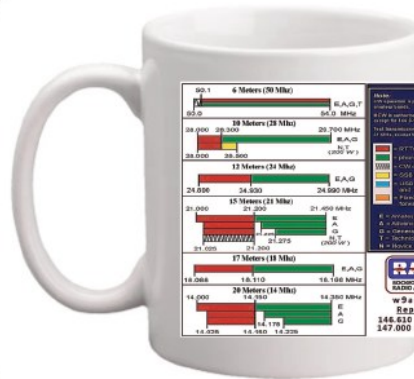
[HTTPS://STORES.INKSOFT.COM/RARA](https://stores.inksoft.com/rara)



**ORDER YOUR
ROCKFORD
AMATEUR RADIO
ASSOCIATION
GEAR TODAY!**



**SCAN
HERE
TO SHOP
NOW**



VIEW MORE PRODUCTS ONLINE



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

RARA Membership* Form

Dues are \$25.00

*This is an editable PDF Form. Fill in the information with your keyboard,
then save the PDF, and then attach it to an email to: w9axdrara@gmail.com*

For Internet payment: To use PayPal, click on the link below. After clicking "Send" and then logging in, enter \$25.00 in the "Dollar Amount", and click "Send" to complete your payment to RARA.

Click here for the PayPal link 

Mail in information: Fill out all the information on the form and mail it with \$25.00 to the following address:

Rockford Amateur Radio Association
P.O. Box 8465
Rockford, IL 61126

Make your check payable to: Rockford Amateur Radio Association

Thank you for your support!

Date: _____ (mm/dd/yyyy) New Membership Renewal
Name: _____ Callsign: _____ License Class: _____
Street Address: _____ City: _____
State: _____ ZIP: _____ E-mail Address: _____
Phone - Main: _____ Alternate: _____

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.**