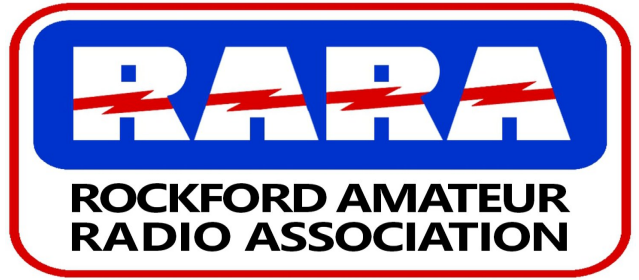


# HAMRAG

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.

## November 2025

**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.



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### Welcome New Members:

Alex Harris KE9DXF

### Thanks to this month's contributors to the Hamrag

David W9CJS, Kerry KD9MAP, Kurt KE9N,  
Larry AC9GO, Larry K9KZT, and Paul WB9HGZ,

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### 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](mailto:w9yum.vs@gmail.com)

**Articles are welcome and encouraged from all hams.**

**Due Date for the December Hamrag is Sun November 29, 2025**

73, Verna—W9YUM, Editor

### NEXT MEETING

FRIDAY— November 14, 2025 - 7:00pm

**Vote to Adopt New Bylaws**

**Program: Stateline Amateur Radio Services—Dan Larson KD9SAZ**

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

Social Time following meeting at Gerry's Pizza  
7403 Argus Drive, Rockford

## President's Message— Larry McFall, KD9HKX

A few days ago I was in the grocery store, standing in line, waiting to check out. At the head of the line was an older lady (Yeah, yeah, I know, I resemble the "older" part.) who was attempting to pay for her groceries. After several tries and changing cards she was going to give up and leave the groceries. The young man behind her waiting in line quickly stepped up and offered to paid for her groceries. She looked at him and said "are you sure, did you see how much that was?" As an answer the young man simply put his credit card into the card reader. The older lady thanked him graciously and told him that she would certainly attempt to "pay it forward."

### ***RARA has a lot to be thankful for this year!***

- ⇒ There are now over 90 members thanks to all of you
- ⇒ A two-day summer field day held at Camp Winnebago was very successful and inspired several individuals to take the step of getting their amateur licenses
- ⇒ A fantastic family picnic at Hononegah Forest Preserve
- ⇒ Monthly meetings and educational presentations
- ⇒ Informative monthly newsletter
- ⇒ The repeater committee worked hard and, as you may have heard, the 146.610 repeater antenna was raised approximately 25-ft improving the range immensely and allowing all of the RARA and other community nets to return to the 610.

With all of the good fortune the club has had this past year shouldn't we "pay it forward" to our community. This isn't to say the club, hasn't contributed, to the community, because we have in several ways. One I mentioned above is field day where we practice our ability to set up and communicate out in the field in an emergency. Field day also involves demonstrating to our community leaders and to our community citizens a mode or method of communication that 99.99% of our fellow citizens do not even know exists. For a few years now we have also sent several volunteers to the Boy Scouts, Jamboree On The Air (JOTA). JOTA teaches the basics of ham radio to young men who may be the future of ham radio.

The Emergency Services committee was also formed this year to fundamentally improve the emergency preparedness of our community. The committee will soon announce the first actions our club has taken to help our community be prepared for emergencies. It is a goal of the board and I hope a goal of you our members to provide whatever we can toward the needs of our community through amateur radio.

Your membership and participation make all of this possible—thank you. I hope all of you have a wonderful Thanksgiving.

73, Larry McFall, KD9HKX



# RARA Board and Local Nets

Tuesday, November 11, 2025 RARA Board Meeting 7:00pm on Google Meet  
Friday, November 14, 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](mailto:lpmcfall@charter.net)  
Vice President - Matt Marshall, W3MBX, 815-222-5959, [matthew.marshal@gmail.com](mailto:matthew.marshal@gmail.com)  
Secretary - Jamie Cook, W9JTC, 779-423-9054, [W9JTC@yahool.com](mailto:W9JTC@yahool.com)  
Treasurer - Verna Schubert, W9YUM, 815-505-8170, [w9yum.vs@gmail.com](mailto:w9yum.vs@gmail.com)

### **Directors:**

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Dan Larson, KD9SAZ, 312-292-1989, [kd9saz@gmail.com](mailto:kd9saz@gmail.com)  
Mike Richardson, KB9SSV, 815-616-0200, [kb9ssv@msn.com](mailto:kb9ssv@msn.com)  
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Webmaster - Verna Schubert, W9YUM, 815-505-8170, [w9yum.vs@gmail.com](mailto:w9yum.vs@gmail.com)  
Repeater License Trustee - Doug Passmore, 815-979-9229, [dgpasmore@att.net](mailto:dgpasmore@att.net)  
Repeater Chairman - Matt Marshall, W3MBX, 815-222-5959, [matthew.marshal@gmail.com](mailto:matthew.marshal@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 - 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, 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)

## Key Dates to Save!

**October—December: Time to renew your RARA membership for 2026.** The form can be found at the end of this newsletter, on the website W9AXD.org, or in the “files” section of the Facebook group and will be emailed to members. Thank you for your past support and ongoing support and thanks to those of you already sending in your dues.

*RARA is 92 strong and growing— good things are coming thanks to many volunteers and your continued membership!*

**Friday, November 14, 7:00pm—Monthly Membership Meeting (all welcome)**

Membership will vote on updated bylaws and there will be a program by Dan KD9SAZ on Stateline Amateur Radio Services.

**Ham of the Year Nominations—Due by November 15**

Ham of the Year award is an honor presented to the RARA member contributing above and beyond what was required to the club and to amateur radio in general during the past year. This year the selection will be made by a committee of RARA members established to evaluate the nominations of deserving candidates from those submitted by club members.

The nomination form is found near the end of this issue with further instruction. It was also be emailed to all RARA members.

**Contest: ARRL November Sweepstakes**

Phone: Third full weekend in November (11/15-17, 2025) The contest begins 2100 UTC Saturday and runs through 0289 UTC Monday. The contest objective is to support amateur self-training in radiocommunications including operating skills, conducting technical investigations and intercommunication with other amateurs. Stations in the US and Canada (including territories and possessions) exchange information with as many other US and Canadian stations as possible on the 160, 80, 40, 20, 15, and 10 meter bands. Use this link for more information <https://www.arrl.org/sweepstakes> Note: you do not need to be an ARRL member to participate.

**Friday, December 12, 7:00pm—Monthly Membership Meeting (all welcome)**

The program will be the awarding of the Ham of Year and recognition of the contributions of others throughout the year. Come and celebrate RARA and enjoy each others company along with refreshments.


**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.

**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](mailto:w9yum.vs@gmail.com) & add me to your contacts.

**Blast from the Past**  
**From the QSL Collection of Paul Dean, WB8HGZ**

**CHIEF BLACKHAWK**  
 66 Ft. Statue Overlooking The  
 Rock River 16 Miles South of Rockford

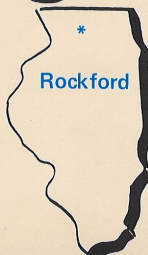


**ROCKFORD AMATEUR RADIO ASSN**

**WB9ETH**

**JIM NILSON**  
 4412 Marsh Ave. Winnebago County  
 Rockford, Ill. 61111 U S A

**W9LVT**



**EX-WØLUD**  
**W5LZG**  
**DL5HI**  
**K9PDH**

**PETER H. GRILLO**  
 2506 BARRINGTON PLACE  
 ROCKFORD, ILL. 61107

**WINNEBAGO COUNTY**

**WB9HPV**

**DAVID J. LARSEN**  
 1403 15th AVENUE 2301 8th St.  
 ROCKFORD, ILLINOIS 61108  
 WINNEBAGO COUNTY

**SLOPE**  
**QRPE**

**SUPER LOW OUTPUT POWER ENTHUSIAST**

**ROCKFORD, ILLINOIS, USA, 61108**

**WB9HGZ**

Radio.....confirming our.....MHz.....contact of  
 .....19.....at.....GMT. RST.....

**Paul Dean**  
 Pse OSL  Tnx  317 Shaw St. Winnebago County

**ROCKFORD, ILLINOIS 61107**

**W9FLL**

Radio.....confirming our.....MHz.....contact of  
 .....19.....at.....GMT. RST.....

**73's MAURICE "Maury" H. NELSON EX W9BRY**  
 Pse OSL  Tnx  301 Oak Knolls Ave. Winnebago County

# Repeater Update & Thanks



Rockford Amateur Radio Association (RARA)

Kurt Eversole · Admin · Top contributor · November 9 at 12:18 PM · 🌐



Thanks to Matt Marshall (W3MBX), Danial Larson (KC9SAZ), Jimmy Curtis (KC9GOL), myself (KE9N), and Eddie (from Tower Works), we have a new antenna for the 146.610 repeater installed at OSF which is about 25 feet higher than the old antenna. This gives us a much better area of coverage, and better service to our community. Thank you to everyone!

Kurt - KE9N



## I Admit it...I Knew Better...by Dave, W9CJS

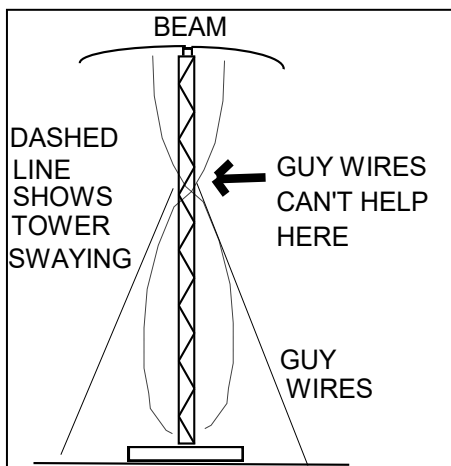
So I'm 40 years old and I've taught High School Physics for about 20 years... and should have known better. I finally got a tower and a beam ... a three element tri-bander ... the Senior version no less, and I found a dealer who was closing out his inventory of ten foot aluminum, tower sections.

"I'm really living", says I as I poured mixed Sacrete into a one cubic foot hole in the ground intended for the tower mount. "Uhh... I guess I'd better run and get some more Sacrete" I said, as I finally read the bag which said "One bag mixed with water will constitute about 1/3 cubic foot." (Note: My Ham friend Bill dug a 2 cubic ft. foundation hole. How many bags of Sacrete did he need?) ... Remember our discussion of scaling?

That done, and later with the concrete hardened and several stainless steel studs sticking firmly up from the concrete, I was ready for the tower.

With the help of a Gin Pole I erected three 10 foot sections into the air and then used guy wires at the 2/3 point of the tower. Next I mounted the used, three element tri-band beam at the top with a center pipe extending down to the rotator a few feet below. "Looks OK, right, it'll never come down."

And it was fine for about a month or two until a moderate wind storm took the beam and tower down into a heap of Aluminum. Whoa! What happened? I thought I'd done everything right, without much thought to the word "resonance".



Apparently, the wind hit the resonant frequency of the beam/tower combination and what with the guy wires at the 2/3 point up the tower, this constituted three, quarter wave sections with my guy wires at the NULL POINT. When the top 1/4 wave swayed one way, the bottom 2/4 waves swayed opposite with the guy wires unable to stop the resulting resonant oscillation.

It didn't take the wind long to collapse the whole assembly. This was not a case of Murphy's law, rather, it was a case of a my failing to consider the mechanical resonance of the tower and beam.

All's well that ends well. The new combination was guyed at both the 1/2 point and the top of the tower and stayed up for at least 20 years.

How about you, have you ever made a dumb mistake like I did ?

# What I Learned In September 2025, by Kerry KD9MAP

"What I Learned in September 2025" by KD9MAP

(Note: all of the following are my OPINIONS:)

I got hit by my very first hack attack, and it was painful. I'll give you some details on what happened, and then review some important security tips.

Despite many decades of experience working with computers, and using better than average security measures, in April I downloaded WSJT-Z (not -X) from SourceForge onto the Win 10 desktop PC that I dedicate to running my Flex 5000a. The download was infected with "PUA ManUnwan," a "low severity" rated Potentially Unwanted App. I don't think that Windows Security/Defender overtly alerted me; I'm pretty sure I would have noticed. I installed the package and all seemed well.

In September, on that Win 10 box, I did something I don't usually do there: a Google Login. Around Sep 21, I noticed that Facebook on that box had been infected with a keylogger. I noticed that both my Android devices had begun installing a blizzard of new apps I didn't want, due to a malware called "MyHub."

Then I noticed on my Linux boxes (where I spend about 90% of my computer time, and where I am frequently logged into Google,) Facebook was also infected with a keylogger. Even a Raspberry Pi running a recent version RPi OS was acting strange.

Somehow, the infection had spread to all boxes that had been Google Login-ed (Android phones, if set up according to SOP, are always logged into Google when on,) regardless of operating system! It turns out that ManUnwan is a browser infector, so it is platform-agnostic. It can install in all Chromium-based browsers, including Brave, the one I preferred.

I shut down most of the machines, and began recovering them one at a time. The first attempt, an SSD format followed by fresh Linux install on an Acer laptop, appeared to be still infected! I tried factory-resetting my Android devices; when done, there was MyHub again, installing junk like Temu and TikTok!

So ManUnwan was reinstalling itself somehow. After many hours of investigation, and long conversations with Google AI, I conclude that, IMHO, the malware lives at my Google Account, probably in Google Drive. IMHO, all it takes is a mere Google Login to respread the infection!

## What I Learned In September 2025, by Kerry KD9MAP

The good news is that the hackers did not raid my online banking or shopping accounts, or steal my identity, yet. The rest of the recovery is very slow, cautious, and time-consuming; let's just say that YOU don't ever want to have to go through this. So here are some tips:

1. Use strong passwords on everything! I manage my passwords with an encrypted vault app, from which I can copy and paste my usernames and passwords into webpage logins. This vault very likely prevented hackers from cracking all my online accounts, so far at least. It's also a vital single master place to keep track of all 387 online accounts; I don't have to use pencil and paper, or memory.
2. Don't store your login credentials in your browser. It's really convenient, and the browser really wants you to, but don't. Don't store them in a plain-text document on any of your computers.
3. This is very important: set up 2FA on all your critical online accounts. Make sure to update your phone number and email settings first, if needed, then setup 2FA, which, whenever you login to the account online, will send you a code by text, for you to enter on the login. This way, there are two channels of authentication whenever you login. This may have saved my critical accounts from getting raided, at least so far. Use 2FA!
4. Use a good antivirus product. I used Windows Security/Defender, which is good, but I made the giant mistake of not checking the Event Logs it generates, in which I subsequently found that it HAD detected and logged ManUnwan, but I guess it decided that a "low severity" PUA did not need to be overtly alerted; I do not remember seeing an alert in April. So dig deep and read all the logs that your antivirus app creates!
5. Use a non-Chromium based browser. I've switched to a browser that was developed from a completely different codebase than Chromium, and with a good ad-blocker extension, and with browser settings dialed up to "Strict" protection, it seems so far to be faster and perhaps more secure than what I've preferred in the past.
6. Whatever browser you do choose, use ad and script blockers on it.
7. Turn on the firewall on your computer. I found out that on my new Linux installs, the firewall defaulted to off, which is nuts.
8. This is extreme, and based only on my OPINION: I'm dedicating one box to anything I need to do that involves a Google Login, which as time goes on, will be less often. I can't risk all my computers getting hit simultaneously again. All other machines will not use anything Google. I do love YouTube, Maps, and Translate, but will run them only on the one dedicated computer, and nowhere else. I will discard my two (inexpensive) Android devices, since they are 100% tied to Google.
9. In fact, I'm getting off of all social media. I recommend Jaron Lanier's book "Ten Arguments for Deleting Your Social Media Accounts Right Now" (2018).

## What I Learned In September 2025, by Kerry KD9MAP

10. If you stay on Google and/or some social media, at least ignore it when it offers to log you in at some other account conveniently with "one click," instead of entering your username and password yourself. It would save you time, sure, but those login handoffs from one SM account to another trade a lot of information about you whose level of detail would surprise you.
11. When browsing the web, don't click on every shiny thing you see. They call it "clickbait" for a reason. And do you really "want to know more about a genius bunion cure that even your doctor won't tell you about?"
12. Do backups. (More than you've been doing.) Verify them after you write them, to make sure they are readable. USB drives are pretty cheap now.
13. Be vigilant online, and when you are using computers and smartphones! Be on the lookout for peculiar novel happenings, like the sudden appearance of a cursor-tracker in Facebook, or new apps suddenly installing themselves on your phone.

### Biggest lessons:

I'm nowhere near as smart as I thought I was.

I didn't do everything I could have done with what I DID know.

There are a lot of baddies out there who are way smarter than me, and there are more attack surfaces and scenarios to manage than ever before.

### Glossary:

**2FA:** Two factor authentication; essential protection for your critical online accounts.

**Anti-virus app:** Detects signatures of known malwares, and, in real time, detects suspicious activity typical of malware operation.

**Ad-blocker:** Software that prevents online advertising from displaying in a browser.

**Android:** An OS for mobile devices.

**Chromium:** A simple web browser. Other browsers built on it as a foundation. Two of those derived browsers are Google Chrome, and Brave.

**Firewall:** Closes non-essential internet ports and makes them invisible to scanners.

**Keylogger:** A malware that records everything you type and relays it to bad guys.

**Linux:** A desktop OS.

**Malware:** A piece of software criminally designed to do harm. It can be inserted at the source, or anywhere along the supply chain up to, and including, your computer.

**OS:** Operating system, essential software that makes computers useful at a fundamental level, upon which mass-produced apps can be installed and run.

## What I Learned In September 2025, by Kerry KD9MAP

**Port:** A numbered virtual connection to which the OS attaches a 'socket,' through which apps communicate over networks. There are thousands of well-known ports into your computer, and you only need a dozen or so open for the routine things most of us do. So you use a firewall to shut down all the ports you don't need.

**Raspberry Pi:** RPi, a family of small single-board computers with extensive hardware interfacing capabilities, and a desktop OS.

**Script-blocker:** Software that prevents other, unwanted, programs from being run inside a browser.

**Social media:** Large online communication platforms such as Google, Facebook, and X.

**SSD:** What we used to call a hard disk or drive, it is high-capacity, persistent, but relatively slow, storage for programs and data.

**Strong password:** A password 24 or more characters long, chosen from upper and lower case characters, digits, and special characters such as punctuation, in a unique and hard-to-guess format.

**Windows:** A desktop OS.

**WSJT-Z:** A souped-up version of WSJT-X. Z has features I consider must-have for FT8 DXing. I guess you better not download it from SourceForge :)

73 DE KD9MAP

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](#)

# Scouts Jamboree on the Air (JOTA) 2025

Jamboree-on-the-Air, or JOTA is the largest Scouting event in the world. It is held annually the third full weekend in October. JOTA uses amateur radio to link Scouts and hams around the world, the nation, and in the local community. Several RARA members, Jimmy Curtis KC9GOL, Mark Ford KE9COB, Matt Marshall W3MBX, and Doug Passmore, KE9CNS assisted at this year's event and Lloyd Sherman KB9APW, at Camp Lowden in Oregon, Illinois. Also participating were members of the Sterling Rock Falls Club (including Lloyd KB9APW). Photos provided by August Ufkin KC9IXD.



# Navy Radio Station NSS by Paul Dean WB9HGZ

## Navy Radio Station NSS

At the 1998 Baltimore Hamfest, I picked up a flyer from the Anne Arundel (Md.) Radio Club announcing a tour of the decommissioned Naval Radio Transmitter Facility, NSS. NSS was a MILLION WATT! transmitting facility operating on 43 kHz whose purpose was to communicate with deployed Navy submarines. Until its decommissioning in 1995, the government did not officially acknowledge its existence, which is a bit humorous, considering its 1200 foot center tower surrounded by nine 600 foot towers located on several acres of land on the Atlantic coast, just off a major highway. John Cummings, N3ZCE coordinated the tour assisted by former transmitter facility staff who guided the tour.



The tour occurred just before the equipment was scheduled to be removed. The antenna farm was slated for demolition within a couple of years of the tour date.

Upon entering the facility, we were greeted by the NSS control console. Near it was a small rack containing the exciter and digital modulation encoding equipment. NSS transmitted four channel VERDIN encoding with a primary commitment to minimum shift keying (MSK) operation. Behind the console was the intermediate power amplifier.



The million watt power amplifier is part of the AN/FRT-S7 transmitter built by Continental Electronics. It uses three water cooled Eimac tubes. The tubes are enclosed in a water tight jacket with circulating pipes attached. NSS maintains its own water distilling and cooling equipment to supply cooling water to the transmitter.

## Navy Radio Station NSS by Paul Dean WB9HGZ

Below, you will see me and two of my sons, Mike, KE4UKX and Matt, KE4UKY standing in front of the amplifier, to give you an idea of its size.



One funny anecdote noted by one of the guides, a former station operator, was that when the transmitter was first put on the air, they had to come in and weld all the steel floor plates together as they were sparking between each other with every transmission.

Following the transmitter room, there are two rooms dedicated to matching the transmitter's output to the antenna system. By the time we toured, the large helix loading coil had been removed from a barn sized room in the facility building. The tuning capacitor room remained. It contained several nitrogen filled tuning capacitors. At the entrance of the room was a long wooden pole with a grounded metal ball on the end. Maintenance personnel used that device to ensure that the capacitors did not have any residual charge prior to entering the room. Here, you will see my XYL, Eileen, WD9EIA in the capacitor room.



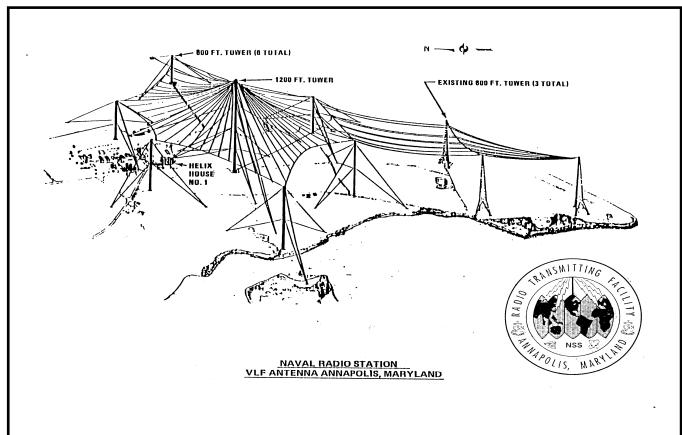
# Navy Radio Station NSS by Paul Dean WB9HGZ

The antenna system was known as a “Modified Goliath Antenna System” consisting of a 1200-foot center tower surrounded by nine 600 foot towers with radials going from the center to the outer towers in a “capacity hat” or “Top Hat” configuration. The center tower had an elevator in the middle of it that maintenance personnel could use rather than having to climb the tower. The guide said that there was “enough copper in the air” in the capacity hat system to “equal the weight of a battleship”.



Below is a photograph of the huge ceramic insulator upon which the center tower rests. To the right of the base is a grounded static/lightning discharge unit. On top of the pole coming from the top of the unit is a metal ball placed some distance from the tower that acts as a spark gap.

In the rear of the photo, you will note the three transmission lines coming from the loading coil section of the transmitter building. The tower was fed at three locations along its height. Also below is a drawing of the “antenna farm” that was provided to tour guests.



Additional information, including the history of the transmitting site, can be found at <https://www.navy-radio.com/commsta/anna.htm>

With thanks to John Cummings, N3ZCE, the former NSS radio operators helping with the tour and the Anne Arundel Radio Club for coordinating and conducting the tour and to the Department of the Navy for its support of the tour, 73,

Paul, WB9HGZ

## The Radio Boys on Poison Island (part 2)

*A tribute to the radio fiction of bygone days* by Larry Lisle, K9KZT

“What will we do!” Said Dick.

“Let’s take an inventory of what we have,” said Donuts.

“Maybe that will give us some ideas.”

“Good idea,” said Tom.

With that the boys emptied their pockets. The total included a couple of handkerchiefs, a Boy Scout knife, a Swiss Army Knife, Tom’s watch, some coins, and a few dollar bills. In the chest they found what appeared to be Halloween costumes and some coat hangers. They also noted the outboard motor, a half empty can of gasoline, a pair of oars and the now wrecked boat.

“Maybe I can swim to shore.” Said Dick, who was a good swimmer.

“Too risky,” said Tom. “I know you’re a good swimmer but in the cold water you could cramp up. And it will be full dark in a little while and you could easily get turned around. Maybe in the morning.”

“Maybe we could build a signal fire with the gas and those cotton costume and some dry wood.” Tom continued.

“Good idea” said Donuts. But I think we can build a radio transmitter.”

“How,” said Dick “We don’t have anything to work with.”

“I read a story in an old magazine about boys who were stranded like we are but made a spark transmitter using an outboard motor and wire from a broom for an antenna.” Said Donuts.

“But we don’t have any wire,” said Dick.

“Yes, we do,” replied Donuts, The coat hangers. We can measure off about 19 inches to make a 2 meter antenna.”

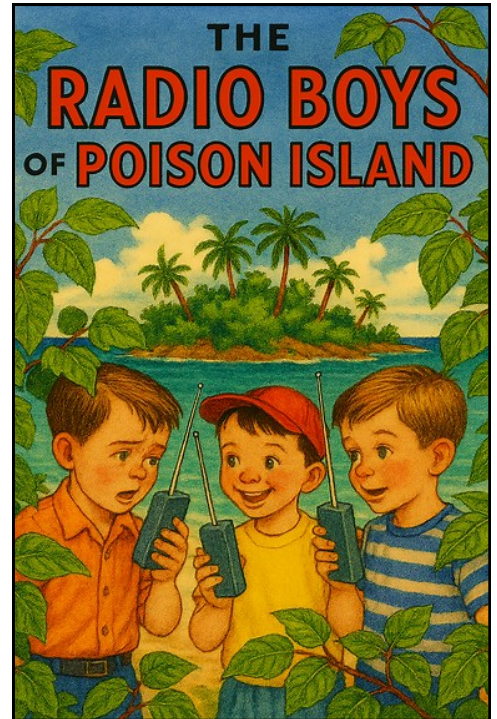
“How will we measure 19 inches?” Asked Dick.

“A dollar bill is 6 1/8 inches long.” Said Donuts who read tube and transistor manuals for fun.

“Three lengths and a smidge should be close enough.”

“Sounds like a plan.” Said Tom. “Dick, you and I will gather some dry wood for the fire and Donuts will work on the transmitter. Let’s go it’s beginning to get dark.”

With that the boys set to work. Soon Tom and Dick had a pile of dry wood. With a little gasoline on a piece of cloth and a spark from the outboard they made a small fire which soon grew brighter as they added wood. The fire warmed both their bodies and their spirits!



## The Radio Boys on Poison Island (part 2)

*A tribute to the radio fiction of bygone days* by Larry Lisle, K9KZT

Donuts meanwhile had a roughly 19 inch piece of coat hanger wire tied to a piece of wood with one of his shoelaces. With Dick's help he got the motor upright so the prop was in the water for cooling and a ground connection. With the cover partially removed he could reach the spark plug with the end of the "antenna" while holding it with the wood.

"Start it up, Tom, and we'll see if it works!" said Donuts.

The engine caught at once and Donuts touched the wire to the spark plug.

Dit, dit dit, dah, dah, dah, dit, dit, dit he sent. The distress signal SOS. He followed it with POISON ISLAND. he repeated the message until he tired, then Tom took over and then Dick.

After what seemed to be a long time but was only a half hour by Tom's watch, Dick shouted, "Look! There are people on the beach!"

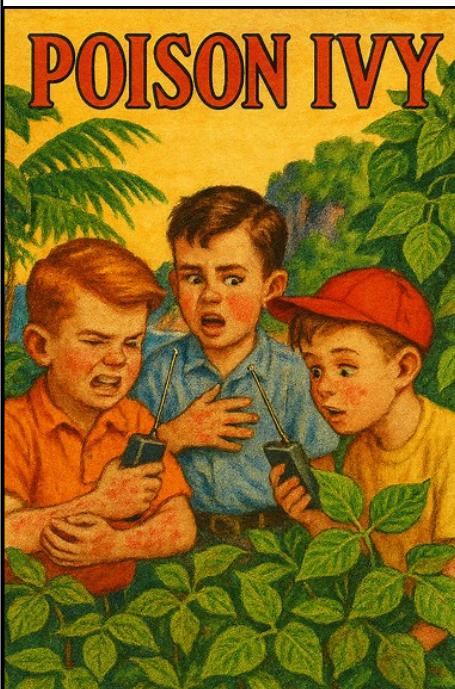
Soon, the police chief was running a large boat up on the beach and wading ashore. He asked "Everybody all right?"

Yes, said Tom, Did anyone hear our signal?

The chief nodded. One ham who said he was listening on sideband on the lower end of two meters, whatever that means, called the station and we had a squad car take a look and saw your fire.

"How did you happen to be here?"

Quickly the boys told their story. Tom added, "We don't know who wrecked our boat or why though."



The chief said "I think I can answer that. The bank was robbed this afternoon. The robbers wore Halloween costumes and escaped on a motorcycle toward the lake. They must have had a boat waiting and came to Poison Island. They put their costumes in the chest and were probably waiting for dark to continue their getaway. You fellows came along and spoiled their plans. They thought you knew about the robbery and when you saw the costumes they thought you would report it. Then they staged the scream so they could get behind you and wreck your boat. Then they left, leaving you stranded.

"Wow!" said Donuts! "We sure stumbled into something!"

"You stumbled into something else, too." Said the chief.

"What's that?" Said Dick.

"You know why they call this Poison Island?"

"Oh, no!" said Tom, You mean..."

"Poison ivy! Said the three boys together.

THE END

## From the Workbench by Larry AC9GO



I was recently reminded of a couple of seemingly minor things that can really throw things off when you are trouble shooting a problem. These two things were found when I was trying to find the problem we were having in our shack.

The problem was actually two fold. My XYL, W9YUM, likes to run FT8 and FT4 and was finding herself being kicked out in the middle of a QSO. It was happening frequently while she was making contacts all over the world and in many of the new and rare contacts that she was hunting down. Before the program would close, she would receive an error code in WSJT-X related to audio input from the transceiver. In addition to double checking all settings, updating the firmware in the Icom 7300, she purchased a new USB cable with ferrites on both ends. Unfortunately, the issue was not resolved and she let me know how frustrated she was and asked for help with the troubleshooting. Additionally, I was losing communication from the rig to my log when working SSB. The first thing I did was check the voltage coming from the power supply. The transceiver was the closest place to check the voltage coming into the unit. I put my probes into the back of the connector at the back of the unit and the voltage was down to 12 volts which means when the transmitter goes on it was dropping down to the low end of the input needed for the transceiver.

It seemed to be a power supply problem, but when I looked at the meter on the power supply it looked just fine. I measured the voltage at the power terminal and it was where it should be. Was there something in the line that would drop the voltage. I called Icom and asked if there was anything in the cable to lower the voltage. The answer was no, but the tech suggested I check the fuse area for corrosion. I found nothing, but I sprayed the contacts with contact cleaner and then WD-40 and the voltage did come up enough to be usable. I later took the fuses out and bent the contacts enough to make the contact a little tighter, which made all better. The problem was still there however. I was wondering about the setup, and if I needed better grounding, so I decided to call a couple of RARA experts. Jimmy KC9GOL and Kurt KE9N were the first two that I contacted. Jimmy had made a living of working on projects around the world. He suggested that I put a 8 foot ground rod near the spot where the cables come into the house. He had not heard of this type of problem, but he said intermittent problems like this were often caused by a bad ground.

I knew he was right, but decided to call Kurt because he has solved a vast number of ham related issues encountered over the years, and maybe this type of thing was close enough to one of those things that he would have an answer. I called and told him my problem, and also what Jim had said, but I wondered if there might be something else I should look at in the mean time before I started into tying everything to an outside ground. The antenna is

## From the Workbench by Larry AC9GO

grounded at the tower which is about 140 feet away and any inside power company ground is maybe 15 feet away.

One thing she was now noticing and mentioned to Kurt was often when the rotator controller was activated, the glitch occurred although it didn't happen every time. Kurt suggested moving the transceiver as far away from the rotor control box to see if the problem stopped, and then maybe move the control box and transceiver away from the computer. The transceiver power supply was already several feet away. Armed with this information we started moving things around to try to find what was causing the glitch on the computer.

We first moved the computer, then the transceiver and the rotor control box and the USB cable was moved to a port at the back of the computer. It didn't provide the solution but those steps did allow us to isolate the problem to the rotator controller.

So I thought, maybe if everything was grounded the problem would go away. I had tried grounding the computer to the transceiver but it had not helped. I thought about what was and what was not and decided to ground the rotor box to the transceiver and Bingo! the glitch was gone and W9YUM was a happy camper!

My next step is to install a ground rod outside where the cables come into the house, run a ground wire or strap inside, and ground everything to one central point.

Have fun with your radio! 73 Larry AC9GO



**The NEW Winnebago County SKYWARN/ Emergency Services** committee project for 2026 under RARA (Rockford Amateur Radio Association) is coming.

First open meeting for ALL interested is expected to be around 2nd week January 2026 giving all the holiday break. STAY TUNED for further info and dates.

Please feel free to view the new website for this so important 2026 project for our service area. The website has been obtained and have been working on it for a few weeks. Much to go yet but again, all, feel free to start viewing, save in your favorites, and continue checking progress of site and updates. Special thanks to new RARA member and Stateline Amateur Radio Services Board Director, Greg Wernick, for all his hard work on this website found at [www.winnebagocountyskywarn.com](http://www.winnebagocountyskywarn.com)

## Hamfest, Contest and DX Links

Hamfests and Swapfests in Northern IL, Northwest IN, and Southern WI [Click the link](#)

# AMATEUR RADIO EVENTS

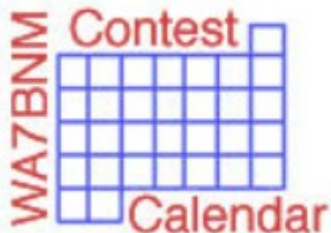


THE HAM RADIO COMMUNITY IN ACTION!

Thanks to K9MSG, Kirk Musselman— [www.amateurradioevents.com](http://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.



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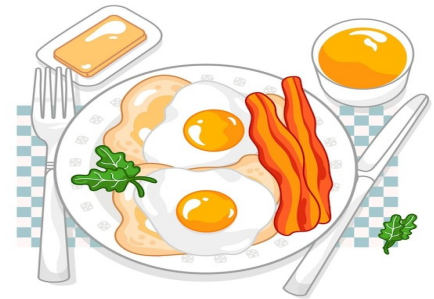
Link to the [WA7BNM Contest Calendar](http://www.contestcalendar.com) or go to [www.contestcalendar.com](http://www.contestcalendar.com)

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](http://www.dxworld.net)

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# DX WORLD.net

## Local Ham Breakfasts & Social Time



### 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.

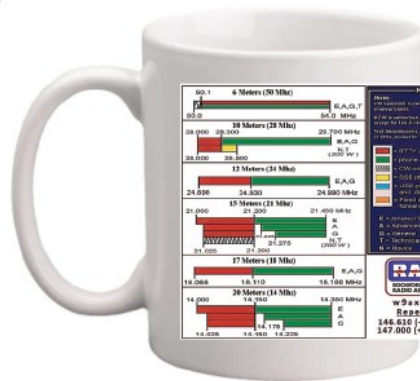


# The RARA Store—Time for Fall Items!

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)



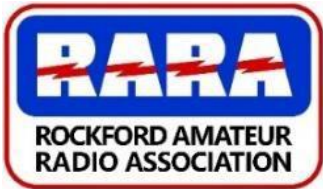
**ORDER YOUR  
ROCKFORD  
AMATEUR RADIO  
ASSOCIATION  
GEAR TODAY!**



**SCAN  
HERE  
TO SHOP  
NOW**



**VIEW MORE PRODUCTS ONLINE**



website: [w9axd.org](http://w9axd.org)  
email: [w9axdrara@gmail.com](mailto: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](mailto: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.**

*(This is an editable PDF Form. Fill in the information with your keyboard, then save the completed PDF, and then attach it to an email to: [lpmcfall@charter.net](mailto:lpmcfall@charter.net)*

## HAM OF THE YEAR - 2025 NOMINATIONS

The Ham of the Year award is an honor that is presented to the RARA member(s) who has contributed the most above and beyond what was required to the club, and to amateur radio in general during the past year. This year the selection will be made by a committee of three RARA members established to evaluate the nominations of deserving candidates from those submitted by club members.

Your nominee should be chosen using two basic criteria: The nominee must be a RARA member, and should have performed exemplary service for RARA and amateur radio during the year 2025. Please take a few minutes to fill out the form below, or a facsimile, completing all of the requested information.

Nominations may be e-mailed or mailed to Larry McFall, KD9HKX, at the address below. All nominations must be received by November 15, 2025. They will remain confidential. Your participation and early response will be appreciated.

Email or mail nominations to:

Larry McFall, KD9HKX  
5683 Coyote Trail  
Roscoe, IL 61073  
email: [lpmcfall@charter.net](mailto:lpmcfall@charter.net)

Nominee(s): \_\_\_\_\_ Call(s): \_\_\_\_\_

I nominate the above person(s) for the RARA Ham of the Year 2025 award for the following reasons:

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Submitted by: \_\_\_\_\_ Call: \_\_\_\_\_