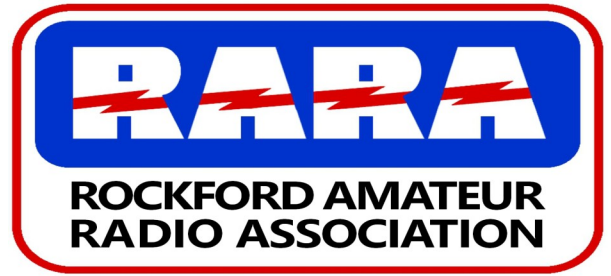


# HAM RAG



Visit our website for more club and area ham information  
In the Rockford area at <http://www.w9axd.org>

## RARA Mission Statement

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

**November 2015**

## President's Column

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Greetings All,

I hope you all had fun and maybe learned something new about the CHIRP radio configuration software.

It's available at <http://chirp.danplanet.com/projects/chirp/wiki/Home> and works with Windows, Mac, and Linux.

Great fun was had by all who participated in the JOTA and Illinois QSO Party in October.

This months program will be a presentation on buying your first HF radio with Kurt Eversole. This will probably be the last "fair weather" meeting so lets be sure not to miss this one.

We are still looking for nominations to fill some Officer and Director positions on the R.A.R.A. Board of Directors. Most importantly Vice President and Directors. See you at the November 13th meeting.

Robert Larson - KC9ICH  
2015 President



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## NEXT MEETING

**FRIDAY**  
**November 13, 2015**  
**7:00 pm**

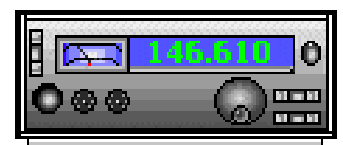
## "Buying Your First HF Rig"

**By: Kurt Eversole - KE9N**

**Location:**  
**OSF St. Anthony**  
**Medical Center**  
**5666 East State Street**  
**Rockford, IL 61108**  
**Foundation Room**

A few of us got together to operate the Illinois QSO Party held on October 18th. Gordon, KC9NEX, reserved the call K9K, and those who operated and logged were: Alvin, KC9GIO, Gordon, KC9NEX, Bob, KC9ICH, Jacek, KD9ELT, Len, KD9CDC, and myself, KE9N. We had a great time, and traded off operating the radio and logging.

We ended up with 520 contacts and 100 multipliers for a total score of 52,000 points. The Illinois QSO Party is a great way to learn the basics of contesting and have a great time! Hope to hear you next year in the contest. 73, ---- Kurt, KE9N ----



Latest news and events on our web site: <http://www.w9axd.org>

## Secretary's Report



### RARA Club Meeting Minutes for October 9, 2015

The meeting was called to order by Robert Larson at 7:12 pm. Welcome to all in attendance.

The Treasurer's report was read. Dave Bond, W9MG, made a motion to accept, and was seconded by Alvin Alexander, KC9GIO. The motion carried.

The September 11, 2015 meeting minutes were read. Kurt Eversole, KE9N, made a motion to accept the minutes as read, and was seconded by Alvin Alexander, KC9GIO. The motion carried.

#### **Old Business:**

There was a question about the 610 repeater and Echolink access. Kurt, KE9N, responded that the hosting radio station doesn't have the extra Ethernet connectivity at the moment. We waiting for a reply regarding an extra line. The station may not have an available IP address as well. Bottom line is that RARA is being cautious in asking the hosting radio station leadership of too much.

Bruce Carlson, N9OHT, gave an update on special event station W9M, where 142 stations were worked in about 3 hours. The call letters have been renewed for 2016, and he hopes to run the event station for Midway Village's WWII Days again.

Alvin Alexander, KC9GIO, gave an update on the Boy Scout Jamboree on the air. We'll need help from 10-5 and we need more operators. Len Soderblom, KD9CDC, is providing a radio and tuner as well.

#### **New Business:**

ARES update: Marianne Geiger, KT9KS, discussed the ARES initiative in Boone County and a possible expansion to Winnebago Co.

The IL QSO party was discussed by Kurt Eversole, KE9N. The location we wanted is not available due to construction. 6 people are interested in helping with the event to be held on October 18<sup>th</sup>.

The location will now be at Kurt's home. Operation is hoped to be on 20, 40 and 80 meters.

#### **Introductions**

Nominations for 2016 officers. Jim Curtis, KC9GOL, made a motion for Robert Larson, KC9ICH, to be president with a second by Larry Schubert, AC9GO.

Bruce Carlson, N9OHT, offered to continue as Secretary, with a motion by Len Soderblom, KD9CDC and second by Shannon Larson, KC9QBC. The Vice-President position is still open.

Dennis Johanson, K9VMY, Kurt Eversole, KE9N, and Gordon Seaman, KC9NEX, are all willing to continue as Board Directors.

**Ham Rag:** Kurt expressed a desire to step down from producing this publication.

The program was a presentation on using CHIRP software to program radios by Robert Larson, KC9ICH.

A motion to adjourn was made by Len Soderblom, KD9CDC, and was seconded by Tom Shouler, N9VJU. The motion to adjourn at 8:35 pm carried.

Total in attendance: 20

Submitted by Bruce Carlson, N9OHT

#### **Editors Note**

If you would like to have something published, please call me or email me at [kurt.eversole@gmail.com](mailto:kurt.eversole@gmail.com).

**Cut-off for the December 2015 issue will be Sunday, November 29, 2015**

Kurt - KE9N, Editor

## RARA Events and Information

### UPCOMING RARA EVENTS

November 13, 2015 - General RARA Meeting 7:00 pm at OSF

November 24, 2015 - RARA Board Meeting 7:00 pm at OSF

December 11, 2015 - General RARA Meeting 7:00 pm at OSF

December 29, 2015 - RARA Board Meeting 7:00 pm at OSF

### FRIDAY MORNING BREAKFAST NEW LOCATION NOV. 18

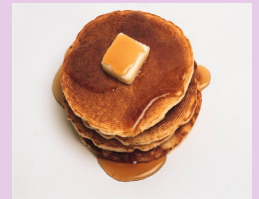


#### FRIDAY MORNING BREAKFAST

Meets every Friday morning from 8 am until about 9:30 am. An informal gathering of ham folks, no affiliations necessary, good food and good company.

*Everyone is welcome to attend.*

***“The Morning Glory”***  
***211 7th Street (new location Nov. 18)***  
***Rockford, IL 61104***



#### RARA Information Net

The purpose of the net is to disseminate RARA related information as well as other Amateur Radio related information. As a club sponsored activity, please check in with Net Control and help make this net a success. The Net Control is rotated between the club members, with all amateur radio operators encouraged to check in. (RARA members as well as non-members)

Let any of the officers and board know your thoughts and ideas. If you wish to be a net control operator, let any of the officers know. All are encouraged and welcome to participate.

**146.610 (pl 114.8) repeater at 8:00 pm, every Monday, except on holidays.**

# HAM OF THE YEAR 2015

## HAM OF THE YEAR---2015 NOMINATIONS

The Ham of the Year is an honor that is presented to the R.A.R.A. member(s) who has contributed the most to the club and to amateur radio in general during the year. This year the selection will be made by a committee 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 R.A.R.A. member and should have performed exemplary service for amateur radio during the year 2015. We encourage you to 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 Robert Larson, KC9ICH, at the address below or handed to me at the next club meeting. All nominations must be received by December 10, 2015. They will remain confidential.

Your participation and early response will be appreciated.

Email or mail nominations to:

Robert Larson, KC9ICH  
3911 Shirley Road  
Rockford, IL 61108-1950  
[kc9ich@arrrl.net](mailto:kc9ich@arrrl.net)

Nominee \_\_\_\_\_

Call \_\_\_\_\_

I nominate the above person for the RARA Ham of the Year-2010 award for the following reasons:

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Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Call \_\_\_\_\_

## THE GHOST OF HAM RADIO FUTURE

The doorbell just rang and a very short ghost stood on the porch holding a sack. My XYL knows the drill. She's the official candy hander-outer.

My thoughts went back to last Monday's Info Net topic: given the choice, would you rather sit for a chat with the ghost of ham radio past or future? Nearly everyone chose the ghost of the past, so let's shift gears and think about ham radio's future.

Do you think TenTec Corporation will continue in business as-is? I have my doubts. Too bad, it was a great organization with pretty good customer service and a great product line.

How about Alpha Amplifiers? They've gone through three different names in the last year. And they're dropping support on their legacy amplifiers.

When will China take the plunge and jump into the ham radio marketplace with both feet? They've been testing the waters with their Wouxons and BaoFengs, and their knockoff amplifier tubes. Is the big splash right around the corner?

How about digital VHF radios. We've been hearing about D Star and other platforms for a decade now. Seems like it's time to start walking the walk.

Will we actually experience a real P5 (North Korea) activation? Or will ShortRound pull the plug at the last moment? If we do get a bonafide activation, will anyone be able to get through the JA wall?

Oh well, there goes the doorbell again. Wonder what kind of creature it'll be this time.....

73 everyone,  
Scott Francis, KG9SF

### **NRA Birthday**

The Yavapai Amateur Radio Club (YARC) of Prescott, AZ, will operate a special event station November 17, 2015, from 1500Z to 2400Z in celebration of the NRA's 144th birthday. The special event station will operate from Gunsite Academy's 2,000-acre campus in Paulden, AZ, north of Prescott. The special event call sign will be K7NRA. Operations will be conducted on the following frequencies: 7.250, 14.040, 14.250 and 21.335 MHz. All amateur stations, especially those operated by NRA members and Gunsite alumni, are urged to participate. A special certificate will be awarded to those stations making contact during the event. QSL with a 9 x 12 SASE to:

YARC  
P.O. Box 1199  
Prescott, AZ 86304

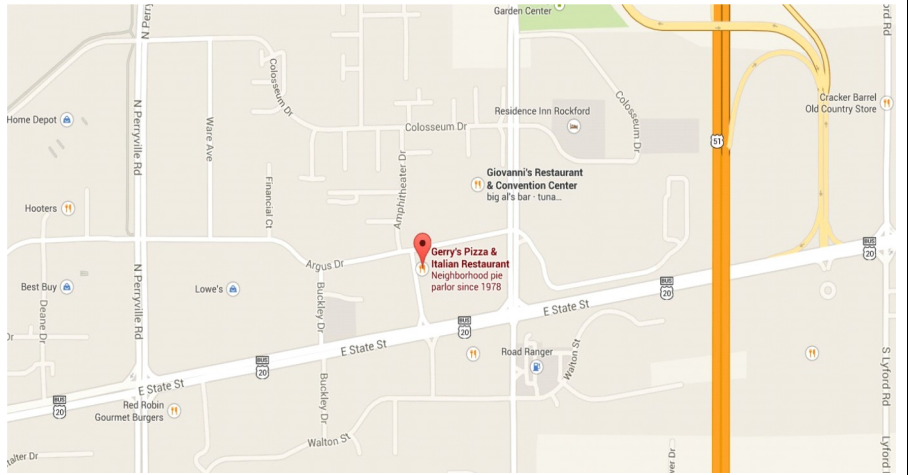




## CELEBRATION MEETING TO BE HELD JANUARY 8, 2016

We will be holding our **January meeting** at **Gerry's Pizza** to celebrate the new year. Bring your spouse, and get to know other members of the RARA family. The starting time is 5:00pm to 6:15pm for cocktails, with dinner starting around 6:30pm. You may order anything you would like, as you will be responsible for your own expenses to be paid by you. RARA will not be offsetting any expenses from funds in the treasury. Come and enjoy the fun! The "Ham of the Year" award will be presented as well.

**Gerry's Pizza**  
**7403 Argus Drive**  
**Rockford, IL**  
**(815) 399-2031**



## ELECTIONS ELECTIONS ELECTIONS

The main focus this month is the election of officers and board members for 2016. Hopefully we will have a full slate of people willing to lead us next year. Our organization needs your input and direction. Having all the board positions filled makes everything run smoothly, and does not require a lot of one's time.

I hope to see you at the monthly meeting and think about volunteering for a position.

73, Robert Larson, KC9ICH

## NOVEMBER IS SWEEPSTAKES MONTH



Every November is the ARRL Sweepstakes contest. This is a contest for stations in the US and Canada (including territories and possessions) to exchange QSO information with as many other US and Canadian stations as possible on 160, 80, 40, 20, 15, and 10 meter bands. CW is on November 7 to 9th, and SSB is on November 21 to 23. The contest lasts 30 hours, BUT you can only work 24 of the 30 hours. That way you can get some sleep and continue the next day. The November Sweepstakes is a contest that requires many items to be exchanged in your report to and from the other station, and sharpens your skills as an operator. If you contact one station in all 83 ARRL/RAC sections you have worked a CLEAN SWEEP! For more information and rules about this contest you may look at [www.arrl.org/sweepstakes](http://www.arrl.org/sweepstakes). --- KE9N ---

### Winter Thoughts For Ham Radio Operators

Winter time can present special challenges, opportunities and risks for ham radio operators. Ice and snow on the antenna is one thing that immediately comes to mind. I generally park one of our vehicles outside during the winter. During winter I need to be careful to rid all ice and snow from the antenna – down to and including the base / mount. It's not so much that the ice would block the transmission signal. More that it can act as a ground at worst or under moderate conditions at least change the electrical length of the antenna without changing the physical length of the ham radio antenna. Air has different conductivity properties than does snow and ice. Every good ham knows that there must be a good match between the electrical length of the antenna and the frequency being transmitted. Get it wrong and that transmitted energy is simply reflected back to the transmitter and sooner or later the factory sealed-in smoke gets out... chuckle!

A thought for me is to do any last minute glue / cement jobs before winter. Some screw connections on mobile antennas are best cemented down with something like Lock-tite. But those sorts of products will only set down to a certain temperature. Winds of winter can be wicked. Snow storms can whip up winds in excess of 50 mph. Add the weight of blown snow to it plus the speed of a car driving into that 50 mph wind brings the velocity up to 115 mph on Appleton Wisconsin's highway 41. Roll down the window and stick your arm out the window once. You will quickly feel the force that your small mobile antenna mount must deal with. I make it a point to lock-down my antenna parts in advance of the storms.

I also re-think trunk access. My ham radio system's coaxial cable runs through the trunk from the antenna to the radio. I think through those cold nights when I need to throw a shovel or snow scraper or luggage into the trunk and get going quickly. Will the coaxial cable get snagged and pulled out? In the car – can it get stepped on or kicked with heavy winter boots?

Everyone should think through where your radio body is located and where snow will be able to fly into or be dropped into. If your radio is mounted in the trunk and you leave your trunk open to load groceries will it get snow in the air vents of the ham radio? If your radio is mounted under the dashboard in the front of the car – can snowy gloves on the dashboard result in melted snow dripping into the radio or the mike?

Think about how you have your ham radio wired into your electrical system. Are you SURE you have big enough fuses and wires for a ham radio that can draw 25 amps at just 100 watts? Do you REALLY want to find out on some desolate road in some blizzard some weekend night when you are out of cell phone contact? If you do run off the road and can't run your engine – will you be able to use your ham radio with the engine turned off? If you have your radio directly wired to the battery – do you have a power-off timer set on the radio so you won't have a dead battery if you forget to turn the radio off? And don't say "Oh what a jerk – I would never do that...". We ALL do that at least once. I doubt that we all admit it...

So much for mobile antennas. Now consider the same types of things for base stations. Any tower work to be done while it's still warm out? Do you have a back-up antenna inside for those ice storm weeks?

Those are some of my winter time ham radio thoughts. Winter is a fun time for ham radio most of the time. No static from lightning storms. No lightning strikes (usually) to worry about. Propagation changes. No leaves on trees for two meter transmissions. And on and on... Enjoy the ride that Mother Earth takes us on this winter season. I know I will...

Stay tuned.

Jon Kreski, AB9NN – Appleton, Wisconsin area

## ITEMS FOR SALE

W9SS - I am selling my complete collection of ALL 1926-2015 ARRL annual Handbooks. \$1,500 or make me an offer! For more details, email [w9ss@hotmail.com](mailto:w9ss@hotmail.com) Thanks and 73, Dennis Eksten, W9SS

## AMATEUR RADIO EXAM INFORMATION

October 17, 2015 Session results

Congratulations to:

John H. Goodwin	KD9ESJ	General
Kevin L. Grant	KC9ERH	Extra
Rickie L. Traeger	WX9RLT	General

Thanks to John Olson W9JGO; Robert Mitchell KU9I; and Mike Proctor AC9JZ.

Amateur Radio exams are held the 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of every month in Rockford IL. The next session is 9 AM November 21, 2015. Walk-ins welcome. Check-in is from 9AM-10AM, no exams started after 10:30. We require two signature ID's and one photo. If you are a licensed Amateur Radio operator bring a copy of your FCC ULS page with your call sign. If you are using a CSCE for exam credit, bring the original and a copy (We need to see the originals & keep a photocopy of each). No copier on site. The test fee is \$14.00. Bring a non-programmable calculator.

Location:

OSF St Anthony Medical Center  
5666 E State St (Bus US20)  
Rockford IL

Exams are held in the St Francis Room (Main Entrance then turn right).

Jim Holich AB9SX

[jholich@comcast.net](mailto:jholich@comcast.net)

### AREA Repeaters

146.610 -	ENC/DEC pl 114.8	W9AXD
147.000 +	ENC/DEC pl 114.8	W9AXD
146.805 -	ENC/DEC pl 114.8	K9AMJ
224.440 -	ENC/DEC pl 118.8	K9AMJ
147.255 +	ENC/DEC pl 114.8	WX9MCS
444.725 +	ENC/DEC pl 107.2	WX9MCS

Linked to FISHFAR

### 2015 RARA Officers and Board

#### Officers:

President - Robert Larson, KC9ICH, 815-540-0309  
[kc9ich@arrl.net](mailto:kc9ich@arrl.net)  
Vice President - Open  
Secretary - Bruce Carlson, N9OHT, 815-218-1764  
[bruce.n9oht@gmail.com](mailto:bruce.n9oht@gmail.com)  
Treasurer - Shannon Larson, KC9QBC, 815-298-7549  
[shannon1234@sbcglobal.net](mailto:shannon1234@sbcglobal.net)

#### Directors:

Ham Rag Editor and Repeater Chairman - Kurt Eversole, KE9N  
815-389-2784 [kurt.eversole@gmail.com](mailto:kurt.eversole@gmail.com)  
W9AXD License Trustee - Scott Francis, KG9SF,  
815-874-7170 [kg9sf@arrl.net](mailto:kg9sf@arrl.net)  
Jim Holich, AB9SX, 779-552-8796 [jholich@comcast.net](mailto:jholich@comcast.net)  
Dennis Johanson, K9VMY, 815-255-4603 [k9vmy@arrl.net](mailto:k9vmy@arrl.net)  
Dave Larsen, N9ZXL, 815-914-6078 [n9zxl@att.net](mailto:n9zxl@att.net)  
Gordon Seaman, KC9NEX, 815-234-5034 [gleasman@outlook.com](mailto:gleasman@outlook.com)



## A LITTLE HAM HUMOR

**For those new to ham radio, here are some useful definitions, pertaining to antennas**

S.W.R. -- A term, applied to any part of the antenna system, which means: "Savings-to-Watt Ratio". Based on the inverse relationship of dollars in the bank and effective radiated power. Characteristic Impedance The usual reaction of your spouse when told about the proposed antenna system.

Traps -- Devices installed in antennas to collect rain-water, to keep it from running further down the antenna.

Wind Loading -- The measure of how much more awkward it gets to handle a big beam as you ascend the tower.

Balun -- (Pronounced: "balloon" by many). An anti-surveillance device, installed in coaxial lines at the antenna, to prevent nosy neighbors from eavesdropping on you through their TV sets.

House Bracket -- A device which secures the house and the tower together. It lets the tower do double-duty by holding up the house during severe windstorms.

Rotator Control Box -- A device which is designed to let you monitor antenna "windmilling".

Windmilling -- A technique whereby prevailing winds are allowed to rotate the antenna, enabling the operator to "scan" the radio horizon.

Dummy Load -- A measure of the stress exerted on a tower by a ham who climbs the tower without a safety belt.

Coax -- (Usually mis-pronounced as two syllables). A term applied to the maneuvering of a piece of transmission line through the attic or walls of a house.

Db's Gain -- A bunch of yellow-jacketed bees found a great place to build their nest, at the bottom of the rotator housing on my tower.

Db's Loss -- Fortunately, lightning struck the tower and the bees were totally destroyed. Neither Db's gain or loss are related to "Da Bears".

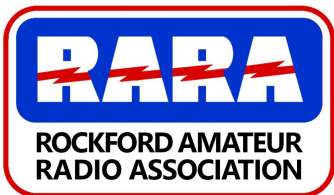
Vertical -- A much-maligned antenna, said by some critics to "radiate equally poorly in all directions". This is not true, as many who have built one know. In fact, the vertical can have directional characteristics, and not radiate at all in some directions. I hope this clears up that myth once and for all!

Sloper -- A variation of the vertical, where high winds have affected thin-walled aluminum tubing used in the construction.

Inverted Vee -- A clever, but inferior, reverse adaptation of the true, "upright Vee", which allows the use of a single support instead of the usual two.

Directional Coupler -- A device inserted into the transmission line which monitors the environment outside the shack, by utilizing the antenna as a remote sensor. For example, when the antenna responds to weather conditions such as severe icing or heavy winds, the coupler will produce indications of these responses. A special directional coupler has even been designed, presumably, to tell you when BIRDS are sitting on your antenna!

Smith Chart -- An alias, to be used when you don't want people to know what chart you really used to design your antenna.



P.O. Box 8465, Rockford, IL 61126  
Website: [www.w9axd.org](http://www.w9axd.org)  
E-mail: [kurt.eversole@gmail.com](mailto:kurt.eversole@gmail.com)

**Local Area Nets**

Monday 8:00 PM RARA Info. 146.610 - 114.8  
Friday Night Fun Net 8:00 PM 147.255 + 114.8  
Illinois Traffic Net (daily) 6:00 PM 3.905 LSB

place address label here

# November 2015

**ROCKFORD AMATEUR RADIO ASSOCIATION  
MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION**

website: [w9axd.org](http://w9axd.org)

Membership Type :  New  Renewal  
Annual Fees:  \$10 - Student (up to age 24)  
 \$25 - Adult  \$15 - Senior (age 62+)

Above rate includes the RARA monthly newsletter, Ham Rag, via email  
Ham Rag via USPS: \$12 extra

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Call Sign : \_\_\_\_\_  
Email Address : \_\_\_\_\_  
Address : \_\_\_\_\_  
Town : \_\_\_\_\_ State : \_\_\_\_\_ Zip : \_\_\_\_\_  
Home Phone # \_\_\_\_\_ Work # \_\_\_\_\_  
Cell # \_\_\_\_\_ Ext : \_\_\_\_\_  
Radio Interests \_\_\_\_\_

May we make your phone and e-mail available for other RARA members only?  
Yes  No   
Comments \_\_\_\_\_

RETURN THE COMPLETED FORM TO:  
ROCKFORD AMATEUR RADIO ASSOCIATION  
P.O. BOX 8465  
ROCKFORD, ILLINOIS 61126