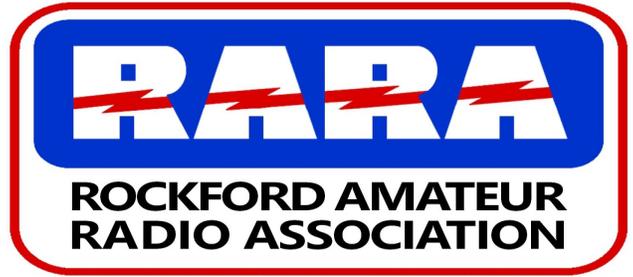


# HAMRAG

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.

**July 2020**

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## Presidents Message

Hi All,

What a year! This is the year that wasn't as someone said the other day. I never dreamed that we would end up with most of our meetings on the air, but when you think of it, that is what we are all about. Ham radio is communication, and I have to say that I have really enjoyed the meetings on the air, and others seem to as well. I do want to have some in person meetings when it is safe, and only when it is safe. Having just finished 40 radiation treatments for prostate cancer and being of the age (77) most susceptible to the virus, I'm not taking any chances these days. On top of that we have a number of members that have conditions that would keep them away. Speaking of that we have just received word of three Hams in the area that have become "silent keys" in just the last few weeks.

Wayne Snell KC9RMK passed away June 24<sup>th</sup>

Dale Landis KB9WD passed away on June 21st

Steve Thorne K9LLI passed away on July 4<sup>th</sup>

Our thoughts and prayers go out to their families and friends. I had talked to Steve just a few weeks ago, and suggested that he join us on some of the local nets so we could talk to him, but he didn't have any equipment set up to do it. I hadn't talked to or seen Dale or Wayne for several years.

I don't know if you all are aware of it or not, but besides the Friday night fun net, and the Monday night RARA net, we are running two Health and Welfare nets on Tuesday and Thursday nights. One is on the .610 and the other on 147.195. Because I have problems getting into the .610 machine on some nights, I've run that on the .195 machine several nights. Club meetings are on the second Friday at 7pm on the .610 but I have also had to move that to the 195 at times. So far we haven't taken any time from the Friday night fun net, and speaking of that JIMMY JUST CELEBRATED HIS 600TH Friday Night Fun Net. Great job Jim. Keep up the good work.

Stay SAFE out there.

73 Larry AC9GO

ps we are working on updating our web presence and

We will be back in the E Media soon.—new guys = new ideas.

## NEXT MEETING

**Friday  
July 10th  
7:00 PM**

**Live**

**On AIR**

**146.610  
Repeater**



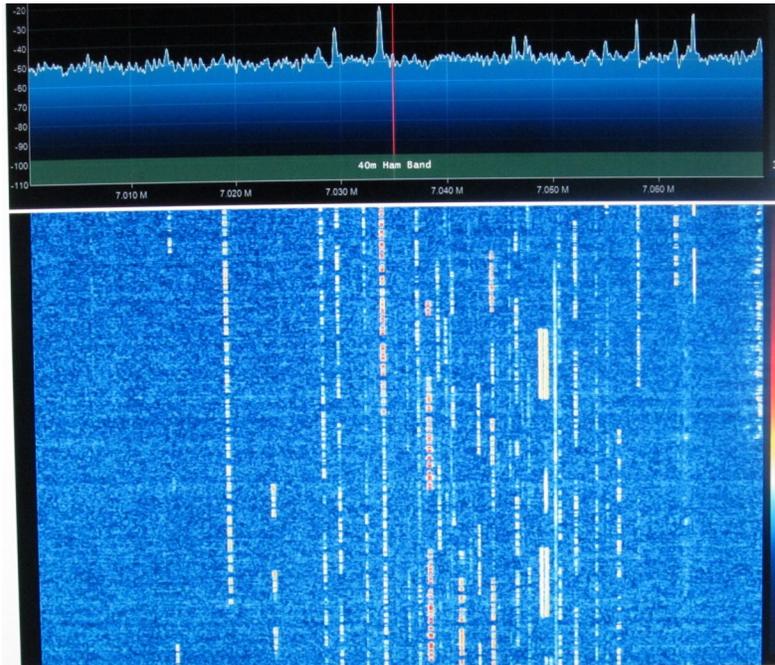
## The Amazing RTL-SDR Blog V3 Radio Receiver, by KD9MAP

For some of us, our first Software-Defined Receiver (SDR) was the RTL-SDR USB dongle. These have been around for about ten years, and I bought mine to monitor ADS-B telemetry from aircraft on 1090MHz. This device is based on a cheap television receiver adapter made for overseas markets. The original dongle was great for VHF and higher frequencies, but not much good for HF reception. A variety of upconverters is available to adapt the original V1 dongle for HF use.

The RTL-SDR has two chips, one supplying the low noise amp and mixer detector, and the other doing the demodulation and USB interface. The miracle of the dongle is that, even though the specifications of these chips are SECRET, hackers and reverse-engineers were able to puzzle out the innards and interfaces necessary to use them as general purpose radio receivers without referencing any documentation. Now, with the V3 model, these geniuses have found the trick to make them work on HF without the need for an upconverter!

For \$22, I have an HF receiver that is as sensitive as, and more stable than, any receiver I have ever owned in my 56 years of SWL/ham experience. It works great with free SDRSharp and GQRX software on a PC. This was my first radio with a pandapter/waterfall display, and I'll never waste time and effort with an old-fashioned button-and-knob base-station radio ever again. In fact, it's so good that I gave away my old Yaesu and Allied analog radios.

Monitoring FT8 on the 40 meter band, without an antenna connected, this thing picks up hundreds of callsigns per day, as far away as New Zealand. Connected to my modest 100-foot long, minus 30 foot HAAT random-wire antenna, thru an old boat-anchor Dentron manual antenna tuner, it provides all the receiver performance I could ever wish for, copying 54 countries on FT8 on the very first day I used it. See below for a picture of typical Sunday sunset traffic on the 40 meter CW sub-band, Kp=1, with antenna tuned for SWR 1.2 @ 7.04MHz:



Plenty of readable CW signals there. HF during solar minimum isn't quite as dead as some say it is! And I still use my old V1 dongle for listening to airband AM voice, VHF/UHF FM, and everything above. There are many other SDRs out there with better specs on paper, but not nearly as inexpensive as this one.

If you decide to get one, make sure you buy yours from the official RTL-SDR Blog Amazon store, because crappy counterfeits abound, and make sure you select the new V3 model. You will have to go to the RTL-SDR Blog forums and articles on the internet to figure out how to use it correctly, since it comes with no instructions. For me, that's a feature-not-a-bug, because studying and learning new things is the whole reason I'm in this hobby. The internet and public library are my Elmers.

With its bounty of new inexpensive RF devices, and the infinite free library of the internet, the twenty-first century is a great time to be a radio tech enthusiast!

73 DE KD9MAP

## 2020 RARA Officers and Board

### Officers:

President - Larry Schubert, AC9GO, 815-624-7772, [larry.schubert@gmail.com](mailto:larry.schubert@gmail.com)  
Vice President - Dan Hallstrom, KB9LOJ, 815-229-7526, [hallstrom@gmx.com](mailto:hallstrom@gmx.com)  
Secretary - Jennifer Van Zieleghe, KD9FMJ, 815-222-4221, [jenleek@usa.com](mailto:jenleek@usa.com)  
Treasurer - Gordon Seaman, KC9NEX, 815-262-0294, [kc9nex@gmail.com](mailto:kc9nex@gmail.com)  
Repeater Chairman - Kurt Eversole, KE9N, 815-389-2784, [kurt.eversole@gmail.com](mailto:kurt.eversole@gmail.com)

**Directors:** Bill Callow, 815-298-1923, KC9OJP, [bill5002@comcast.net](mailto:bill5002@comcast.net)

James Curtis, 779-537-2233, KC9GOL, [jimhcurtis7818@yahoo.com](mailto:jimhcurtis7818@yahoo.com)

Jeffrey Metters, KD9MEC, 815-670-5506, [jeffmetters@gmail.com](mailto:jeffmetters@gmail.com)

Mark Broman, 815-218-5514, N9CNW, [markbromab@hotmail.com](mailto:markbromab@hotmail.com)

Hamrag Editor - Jeffrey Metters, KD9MEC, 815-670-5506, [jeffmetters@gmail.com](mailto:jeffmetters@gmail.com)

Webmaster - Skylar

Repeater License Trustee - Gordon Seaman, KC9NEX, 815-262-0294, [kc9nex@gmail.com](mailto:kc9nex@gmail.com)

## AMATEUR RADIO EXAM NOTICE

There will no longer be testing available in Rockford.

Contact Brandon for more information as to the Freeport IL testing times and location.

Brandon J McGrew [bmacmagoo@hotmail.com](mailto:bmacmagoo@hotmail.com) There is also testing available in Janesville.

Contact [wi9fry@gmail.com](mailto:wi9fry@gmail.com) For more info.

## RARA Repeater Information

Both repeaters (146.610 and 147.000 (both have a pl 114.8)) will function with both digital and analog radio signals, but the repeaters require time to determine whether the signal is digital or analog. To operate the repeater properly you must first be sure the frequency is clear, then key and hold the microphone button down for **1-2 seconds**. Then begin speaking. If you fail to do this, the first part of your message will be lost.

## Area Nets

**Monday Night 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 Jimmy, KC9GCR, (net control). **146.610 - offset (pl 114.8)** RARA repeater at 8:00 pm, every Monday, except on holidays.

**Friday Night Fun Net** - Every Friday night at 8:00 pm on the **146.610 - offset (pl 114.8)** RARA repeater with Jimmy, KC9GCR, as net control.

**Tuesday Night Health Net**—**146.610** hosted by Larry AC9GO, 7 pm

**Thursday Night Health Net**— **147.195** hosted by Bill KC9OJP, 7 pm

# RARA Membership Form

If you would like to join the Rockford Amateur Radio Association, please fill out the form below and mail it (with the membership fee payment) to the address shown at the bottom of the form. If you would like to join at our next meeting (see cover for meeting details), fill out the form and bring the form with your payment to the meeting and see our treasurer. **Thank you for your support!**



## MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

website: w9axd.org

Membership Type:  New (New memberships after July 1st are 1/2 price)  Renewal

Annual Fees:  \$20 - Student (up to age 24)

\$35 - Adult (25-61 years old)  \$25 - Senior (Starts the year you will turn 62)

Above rate includes the  
RARA monthly newsletter, HamRag (website download)  
HamRag 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

All membership applications to become either a new member or to be reinstated as a member of RARA must be approved by the RARA board.

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_ Membership Year \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_