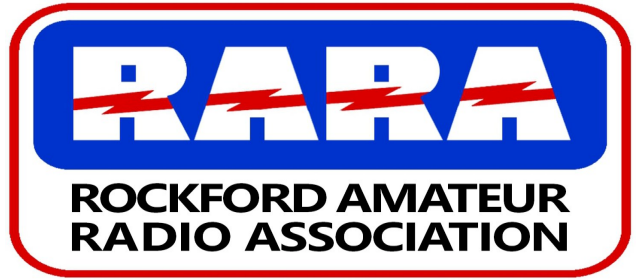


# HAMRAG

Visit our website for more club and area ham information at <http://w9axd.org>, or join us on



## RARA Mission Statement

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

## January 2024

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## Presidents Message

Greetings.

I am sure everyone had a great Christmas and a Happy New Year. We will be planning in 2024 to increase attendance by offering more programs. This would also increase the meeting attendance and the membership to RARA. If you know anyone who would be interested in presenting a program, please let an officer know.

See you at the next meeting on January 12, 2024.

Best Regards,

Tom Shouler, N9VJU

## NEXT MEETING

FRIDAY  
January 12, 2024  
7:00pm

“Collecting Keys”

Located in the  
Foundation Room

Location:  
OSF St. Anthony  
Medical Center  
5666 East State Street

## For Sale by RARA

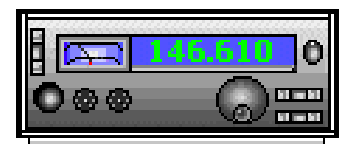
Programmed Baofeng UV-5RTP Radios

\$30 each—pick up at Club Meeting

Contact Larry McFall, KD9HKX

815-900-1820

[lpmcfall@charter.net](mailto:lpmcfall@charter.net)



## Local Events and Information

January 12, 2024 RARA Membership Meeting 7:00pm

January 24, 2024 RARA Board Meeting 7:00pm on Google Meet

### 2024 RARA Officers and Board

#### **Officers:**

President - Tom Shouler, N9VJU, 815-633-0089, [n9vju@comcast.net](mailto:n9vju@comcast.net)

Vice President - Larry McFall, KD9HKX, 815-900-1820, [lpmcfall@charter.net](mailto:lpmcfall@charter.net)

Secretary - Larry McFall, KD9HKX, 815-900-1820, [lpmcfall@charter.net](mailto:lpmcfall@charter.net)

Treasurer – Verna Schubert, KD9YUM, 815-505-8170, [schubie2@charter.net](mailto:schubie2@charter.net)

#### **Directors:**

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Larry Lisle, K9KZT, 815-397-9595, [l.lisle@usa.net](mailto:l.lisle@usa.net)

Matt Marshall, W3MBX, 815-222-5959, [matthew.marshall@gmail.com](mailto:matthew.marshall@gmail.com)

Kevin Puckett, N9EGF, 815-218-1551, [krpuckett@gmail.com](mailto:krpuckett@gmail.com)

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Webmaster - Open

Repeater License Trustee - 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)

### Local Net Information

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

**Tues** - 7:00pm - Health & Tech Net & CW Lesson , 146.610 (-) offset, pl 114.8  
7:00pm - Rock County Public Service Net, 145.450 (-) offset, pl 123.0

**Wed** - 7:00pm - Stephenson Cnty. ARES Net, 147.390(+) offset, pl 114.8  
7:30pm - Greater Beloit Radio Net, 147.120 (+) offset, pl 123.0

**Thu** - 7:00pm - Northern Illinois Skywarn Training Net, 147.195 (+) offset,  
pl 114.8, with the Health & Tech Net & CW Lesson following.

**Fri** - 8:00pm - Friday Night Fun Net, KC9GCR, 146.610 (-) offset, pl 114.8

**Sat** - 8:00pm - Saturday Ragchew Net, 146.610 (-) offset, pl 114.8  
9:00pm - Saturday Night Fun Net Milw., 146.910 (-) offset, pl 127.3

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

## Local Events and Information

Looking to upgrade or know someone looking for a testing location?  
More information available at [ARRL.org](http://ARRL.org)

**01/13/2024 | McHenry IL 60050-4422**

**Sponsor:** NW IL S WI Amrron

**Location:** McHenry Masonic Lodge

**Time:** 10:00 AM (Walk-ins allowed)

**02/03/2024 | Freeport IL 61032-4116**

**Sponsor:** Stateline Amateur Radio Club

**Location:** Freeport Public Library

**Time:** 12:30 PM (Walk-ins allowed)

**02/03/2024 | Madison WI 53715-2143**

**Sponsor:** Four Lakes ARC

**Location:** Univ of WI Space Place

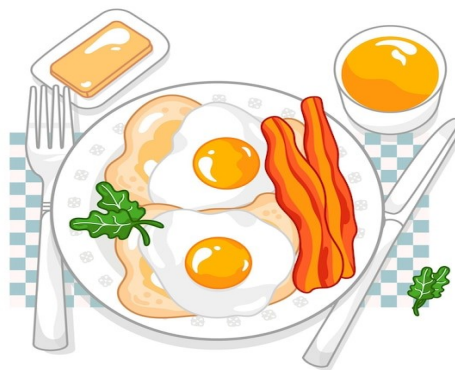
**Time:** 8:00 AM (Walk-ins allowed)

**02/20/2024 | Woodstock IL 60098-2953**

**Sponsor:** McHenry County Wireless Assoc

**Location:** Free Methodist Church

**Time:** 7:00 PM (No Walk-ins / Register or Call ahead)



### **FRIDAY MORNING BREAKFAST**

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

### Parks On The Air at Rock Cut State Park (K-1019) by John Alcock, NG9M

Hello, I am John Alcock NG9M. The purpose of this article is so that other members can learn a little bit about me, and hopefully take a nugget or two about field operating. For those that do not know much about me, I obtained my technician license during the first COVID-19 shut-down in early 2020. My first callsign was KD9SHG. About a month later I tested for General and passed on my first attempt. Around this time, I bought my very first HF transceiver, a Xiegu X108G. In the following days I ordered an MFJ-1984LP (40m-10m EFHW), and bought a lawn mower battery and charger from Menards. That night I setup my equipment in the backyard for the first. My first few QSOs were Parks on The Air activations. Fast forward a couple of years later I now activate Rock Cut State Park on a somewhat consistent basis and my equipment has drastically improved.

My equipment consists of a Yaesu FT-891, LDG Z-11Pro II 100-Watt Automatic Tuner, along with a variety of antennas. For power, I have been using an EverStart Maxx Marine Battery 12V 110ah and it is extremely heavy because it is lead acid. However, while writing this article I have actually ordered a 20ah LiFePO4 battery. I'm almost positive that my back is going to thank me. For CW activity I am using the cwmorse outdoor pocket double paddle. For digital work I use a digirig mobile and for FT8 timing I have been using software called JTSync. I will have links at the end of the article for those that are interested.

I saved the best for last, antennas. When you are activating a park, you ARE the "DX". If all you can do is get a hamstick or some piece of wire in a tree, that's absolutely fine (I've done it a number of times). Because Mr. Operator in another part of the country will more than likely have a better antenna system will probably still be able to work you. My philosophy about an activation is speed. I mainly stick with 40-10 EFHWs, Random Wire antennas. Setting up wire antennas take time and when it is cold, I want to be back in the car and out of the wind. During these winter months I primarily use a Chameleon Antenna MPAS Lite. Is it the most efficient? Absolutely not. However almost half of my POTA activation QSOs have come from that antenna because I get on the air fast and know that people are hunting me. In one afternoon alone I logged 54 QSOs, It was a mix of SSB (50watts), and CW (15watts). At the end of the article is a screen shot of the Reverse Beacon Network representing the time I have had this antenna. I am not going to lie, it was expensive, but I was able to purchase the antenna system during Black Friday with a 25% off coupon code.

During this activation I also worked 2m simplex using nothing but a Baofeng and a rollup J-Pole antenna. The night before the activation I made a post on the RARA Facebook page and said that I was going to be attempting to make some VHF QSO. The day of the activation I made EIGHT 2m QSOs on 146.520. I believe the longest QSO was around 14-miles with Jim (KD9GDY) and Brenda (KD9GDX) in Wisconsin.

## Feature Articles

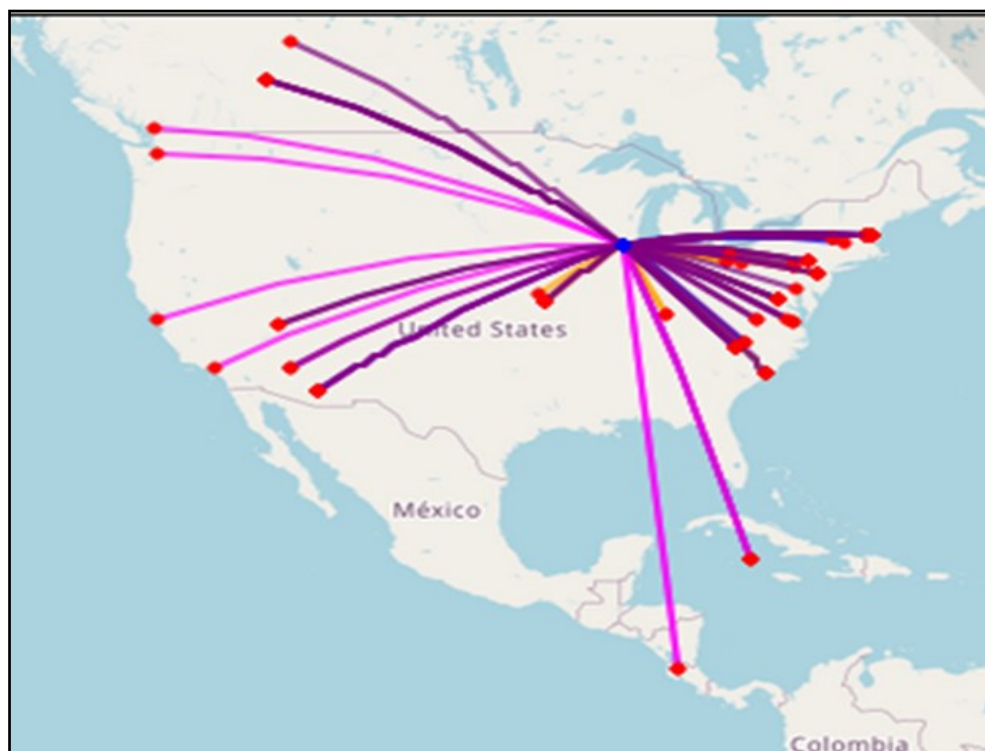
I had a few people tell me that others were calling out to me trying to make contact, however I was unable to hear them due to a hill, and well, all I had was a Baofeng. I had two reasons for doing this, I wanted to get locals in the Log for Rock Cut POTA, and also because (I'm guilty of it as well) I wanted to advocate for more VHF/UHF simplex in the area. In the future I am going to be attempting 6m QSOs and I would like to do a 2m SSB QSO sometime however I do not have any 2m SSB equipment, so if anyone has some please let me know.

I want to challenge people to get out and activate a park here in Illinois or Wisconsin. Do not think that just because you don't have the best equipment you cannot accomplish an activation. There are some activators that all they use is a Pixie CW transceiver and some wire. If anyone has any questions or wants to do a park activation sometime do not hesitate to contact me.

e-mail: [NG9mradio@gmail.com](mailto:NG9mradio@gmail.com)

### Links:

- |                          |   |
|--------------------------|---|
| EverStart Marine Battery | - <a href="http://tinyurl.com/vtuc6tzt">http://tinyurl.com/vtuc6tzt</a>       |
| CW Morse Double Paddle   | - <a href="http://tinyurl.com/2h6y45kx">http://tinyurl.com/2h6y45kx</a>       |
| DigiRig Mobile           | - <a href="http://tinyurl.com/4het2e2t">http://tinyurl.com/4het2e2t</a>       |
| 40-10 End Fed Half Wave  | - <a href="http://tinyurl.com/yckycutx">http://tinyurl.com/yckycutx</a>       |
| Reverse Beacon Network   | - <a href="https://www.reversebeacon.net/">https://www.reversebeacon.net/</a> |



## Feature Articles

### It Ain't What it Seems - Dave Gauger W9CJS

We Hams use our S-meter as an indication of signal strength, knowing that it is in no way a precise, measurement. It is, however, useful and we all use its readings as a general indication of relative signal strength. Most S-Meters are adjusted so that S-9 represents about 50 Microvolts. Each S-unit 0-9 represents about 6 dB change. Above S-9 most calibration points are in 10 dB increments.

Many of us believe that increasing our power from, say, 100 watts to the legal limit of 1500 watts will produce a huge signal increase, and to an extent, it certainly does in our quest to work rare DX.

In actuality, the difference between a full KW, 100 watts and QRP,(5 watts) is smaller than we think. One glance at the drawing of a typical S-meter will show that certainly, there is a difference, but not perhaps as great a difference as we envision. Looking at the picture, if a 100 watt station is S-9 and increased its power to 1500 watts, or reduced it to 5 watts, note where the meter is likely to indicate.

I once was that operator with 1500 watts and a 40 ft. tower with 3 element Yagi. I then moved to an HOA community, where I am limited to 100 watts and a multi-band dipole. In the past few years I've come to enjoy QRP using just a 39 inch home-made Mag Loop, inside my home.. I have just as much fun now as I did with the Kw and Ya-gi I love the challenge that it brings, along with the smile on my face for working 30 plus stations and perhaps a European on a one hour POTA outing.

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### Looking Way Back with AC9GO

I was thinking how different life was in the 1950's when I was going to school, and when I became interested in ham radio. Radio was much simpler back then and was mostly CW and AM. There were no satellites, and very little single sideband (SSB), in fact in the later part of the decade there was a big argument about how SSB was ruining ham radio. Radios weren't near as sophisticated back then as they are now and were almost all tube radios. Transistors had only been on the market for a short time, and they were expensive, mostly experimental, and I might add very easy to ruin. It was said, if you got them too close to a soldering iron, the heat would kill them, but it may have been static electricity which was something you didn't have to worry about with tubes. All I really knew at the time was it cost me \$10 for 2 /CK722 transistors, and I was never able to get them to do anything. That was a lot of money to spend at that time because a dollar then was worth about \$10.92 in today's money.

## Feature Articles

Anyway, most hams in the fifties had a receiver and a transmitter. Transceivers didn't come along until the late fifties, and then it was a Collins radio and that was top of the line. My buddies and I had the chance to use the Collins KWM2 on Field Day. It was one of the first ones out, we spent most of the night on it, and made very few contacts. It was SSB and everything sounded like Donald Duck, there were very few SSB stations around, and my guess is most of the AM crowd looked at us as interference. Most of the equipment was not stable until it had warmed up for about a half-hour or more. Can you imagine what it would be like to try PSK 31 or FT8 on something like that. Single sideband was bad enough. Anyway, there were no ham satellites back then, no digital communication unless you count teletype which were all mechanical, and I'm not sure hams were using it at that point. Remember, the hams that had been operating in the 1940's were mostly in the military, so there was little innovation in the ham community until the 50's. Ham radio was shut down during WWII. Sputnik was the first satellite, it went up in October of 1957 and came down in January of 1958, just three months to the day that it went up.

Fast forward to today. We currently have 18 fully functional ham radio satellites. We also have the International Space Station (ISS) that we can communicate with. We now have over 15 different types of digital communication, with several iterations of each kind. Today we have transceivers that are of solid-state construction, and can communicate with our home computers, and with computers around the world, so we can talk to a group of people in other parts of the world on the air and through the internet. We have the ability to send a color picture to anywhere in the world or to the ISS if they want a picture, though generally they send them to us. Where it was once a chore to get a message to someone in the county today, with a handheld, we can talk to people in several counties with a \$30 radio and the aid of a repeater. In fact, with that same radio and a linked repeater in the area, you can talk to almost any part of Wisconsin. Some of these systems span several states. Before cell phones we used the 146.610 repeater to make calls to report accidents. Today we all carry our cell phones with us, which have more computing power than the main frames of the 50's which seemed to do little more than play "Mary Had a Little Lamb" with a single note at a time, but we were excited to hear a computer play music of any kind at the time.

The internet wasn't available to the public until April 30, 1993, according to an article on NPR's website. I didn't realize how cutting age my wife and I were because we met on Prodigy in October of 1992 on a bulletin board on Prodigy, and married April 15, 1993. I suspect that Prodigy and the other services available at the time, though connected through the internet, didn't allow complete access to all of the internet. For one thing you could not send email from one service to another service. Today ham radio uses the internet in several ways to enhance communications.

I mentioned earlier that a dollar in 1957 is worth about \$10.92 today. Remember, most hams had both a transmitter and a receiver as transceivers were rare and very expensive at the time.

## Feature Articles

To illustrate how expensive the hobby was back then, let me give you an idea of what new equipment costs were compared to today's inflation adjusted dollar.

A Collins KW-1, a transceiver, cost \$3,850 then which would be \$42,042 in today's money. A Hallicrafter SX-101 receiver \$395 then and \$4,313 in today's money, and a kit from Heathkit for a DX-100 transmitter with AM, and CW only was \$189 then or \$2,069 in today's money. At the time I would have been a sophomore in high school making about \$12.75 a week at 85 cents an hour at a 15 hour a week part time job. Those prices were from a February 1957 QST from ads.

Fast forward to today. Just this week I downloaded MMSSTV a SSTV program that automatically figures out what program is being used and sends the picture to the computer. These are in color and would not have been possible in 1957 (see below). This week the space station is sending us pictures. With the right equipment you can make a contact almost any day in Europe or South America. If you want to use your cell phone or computer to get on the internet you can go online to make a contact in most countries around the world on a repeater there. If you want to find out if it is snowing in upper Wisconsin, just hop on the right repeater that is hooked to repeaters all over the state and ask anyone who is listening up there to tell you the weather.

Just think of the many things you can do with ham radio today and ask yourself if you could have done it in the fifties. Hey, enjoy your radio, and have a very Happy New Year!

73 de AC9GO [larry.schubert@gmail.com](mailto:larry.schubert@gmail.com)







# WCRA 57<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL MID-WINTER HAMFEST (ELECTRONIC HOBBY EXPO)

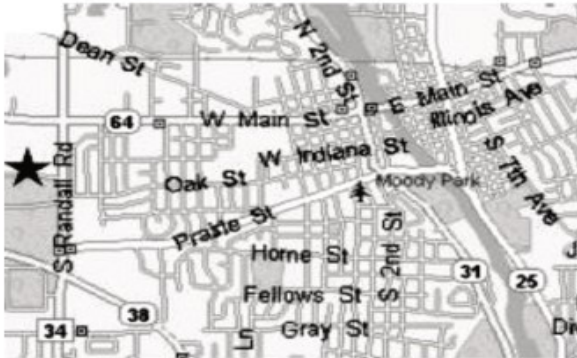
HAM RADIO, COMPUTERS AND ELECTRONICS FLEA MARKET



- Free Parking • Heated Indoor Facility
- Paved Parking Lot • Food • Amateur Radio Exams
- Educational Forums • Raffle Prizes

**Sunday, January 14, 2024**  
Doors open at 8AM (close at 1pm)

Kane County Fairgrounds Expo Center  
525 S. Randall Rd., St Charles, IL  
(coordinates: N 41.9056, W 88.34232)



**Current Forums:**  
9:00 AM - RT Systems  
More To Follow

### Tickets:

**Advance, \$8** (4 raffle stubs)  
**At the door, \$10** (1 raffle stub)

- Children under 12 admitted free
- All Scouts under 18 in their official scout uniform admitted free

### Exhibit Floor Rental:

**\$30/table** (\$35 after 1/1)  
**Electricity available for \$15/drop**  
**1 chair per vendor provided**  
(\$2 for each additional chair)



*Talk-In on WCRA's 2M Repeater 145.31/- (107.2 Hz)  
and National Simplex Frequency 146.52 MHz*

(630) 923-5447    info@w9ccu.org    [www.w9ccu.org](http://www.w9ccu.org)

ORDER ONLINE

### Advance Ticket and Flea Market Table Order Form

<hr/>		___ Tickets	x \$8.00	= \$ ____
Name	Call	___ Tables	x \$30.00*	= \$ ____
<hr/>		___ Electrical Drop	x \$15.00	= \$ ____
Address		___ Extra Chairs	x \$2.00	= \$ ____
<hr/>		Total Amount Enclosed = \$ ____		
Email	Phone			

Mail to: WCRA, PO Box QSL, Wheaton, IL 60187-1055

### Editors Note

If you would like to have something published, please call me, or email me at [schubie2@charter.net](mailto:schubie2@charter.net)

**Cut-off for the February 2024 Hamrag will be Monday, January 29, 2024**

Verna—KD9YUM, Editor



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

# 2024 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). See below for mail in information and/or PayPal information)*

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ (mm/dd/yyyy)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Callsign: \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone - Home: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell: \_\_\_\_\_

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 \_\_\_\_\_

What things do you like to do with ham radio?

\_\_\_\_\_

What things do you want to do, but need more information to do so?

\_\_\_\_\_

Would you be available to make a presentation on some part of our hobby and what?

\_\_\_\_\_

Do you have any questions that we can help you with presently? If so, explain below.

\_\_\_\_\_

**Mail In:** Please 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.

**For Internet application and 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. Also, **DON'T** forget to email your completed form to: [w9axdrara@gmail.com](mailto:w9axdrara@gmail.com) for your membership application. *Thank you for your support!*

PayPal Link:



\*Membership is based on approval of the RARA Board. The membership fee will be returned if you are not approved. New memberships are good from 10-1-2023 thru 12-31-2024.