Our bright and beautiful city has so much to offer. And in the heart of the city, at Clearwater Fire Station #48 on Belcher Road, is where the Clearwater Amateur Radio Society, Inc. holds its monthly meetings. This Clearwater based group has been an official club since 1954. You can learn more about them here: Clearwater Amateur Radio Society, Inc.

According to Ham Radio Deluxe, Amateur Radio, also known as "Ham Radio," is both an amateur radio service and a hobby. It is a wireless method of communication connecting individuals from every corner of the globe. Licensed operators use radios varying from hand-held, to base-station radios, and dashboard mounts, to communicate with other "hams" across the street and worldwide.

Ham radio involves radio communication (verbal,as well as Morse code, and digital sound card) for personal, non-commercial purposes. Common uses of ham radio include: emergency communications; interpersonal communications; experimentation and innovation; public service; education; contests and competitions; and satellite communications. The Clearwater club members provide event communications support for local charity walk-a-thorns; runs and bicycle events; they actively participate in the National Weather Service SKYWARN severe weather spotter program, and they are always available to city staff in case of natural disasters or severe weather events.

Countryside resident, Ken Shur, invited me to one of their competitions earlier this year, and it was exciting to see the group in action. On a chilly Saturday afternoon, Firestation 48 was bustling with activity. Antenna were set up everywhere, and members were focused on connecting to people across the nation and globe. The competition lasts 24 hours straight. It is an around-the-clock event! The club is open to people of all ages and abilities. They'd love to have you connect with them (radio or otherwise) to learn more.

In the club's most recent nation-wide contest, on July 9, Ken took fifth place in individual competition for the club. They are still waiting on the club's place nationally. Generally, The Clearwater Amateur Radio Society, Inc. places in the top 10 nationally. Wow! To learn more about HAM radio, read this "Introduction and General Overview" from the folks at Ham Radio Deluxe. How lucky we are to have this prestigious and historic club right here in Clearwater.