

# T H E X Y L



The Riverland Amateur Radio Club is a Special Service Club affiliated with the American Radio Relay League

## Repeater

146.970 PL 131.8



## RARC Net

The club's weekly net is 8 p.m. Sundays on the 146.970 repeater.



## Club meetings

**Club meetings** are 7 p.m., Tuesday, at Gundersen/Lutheran in La Crosse. They will be in meeting room 1 on the lower level of the clinic.

**"Meeting of Elmers,"** advice, discussion and help is at 6 p.m. in the conference room in the Gundersen Clinic.



## Swapfest: bargains for all

You never know what a guy like Jerry Ehlers, W0SAT, may bring to the RARC Swap.

## Swapfest info

**What:** The RARC Swapfest

**When:** 8 a.m.- noon Sat. Aug. 10

**Where:** Onalaska Community Center, 515 Quincy St.

**Cost:** admission is free and tables are free of charge.

The door prize drawing will be at 11 a.m. and you must be present to win.

**For more information:** Roger Reader, KA9BKK, 608 783-0723.

Some fellas have never purchased a new item for their shacks; some fellas have garages full of dusty, unused gear; and some widows scratch their heads wondering what to do with the dusty, electrical mess in the basement. The solution for all three of these groups is the annual Riverland Amateur Radio Club Swapfest, Sat. Aug. 10. It runs 8 a.m. noon at the Onalaska Community Center, 515 Quincy St., Onalaska.

Hams are notoriously tight with their pocketbooks so many, looking for a new radio or other piece of gear, follow Roger Reader's, KA9BKK, advice to look for the guy who always buys the newest and the best and catch him when something newer and better comes out forcing him to dump the last load.

XYLs are very important in the world of buy, sells and trades because many of them say something like, "if you want a new radio get rid of the old one first."

The RARC Swap is a safety valve for those fellas who have garages so tightly packed with electronic gear that they must squeeze sideways through to get to the kitchen door.

They would have more cash available for a decent antenna if only they'd drag some of the ancient computer gear to the Swap for sale. The XYL would be ecstatic if, for once in two decades, she could put her Ford Escape inside the garage.

Widows don't often come to the RARC Swap unless they're on the hunt for a new Studmuffin. A good, responsible Ham would keep his inventory to a reasonable level so the widow doesn't have to figure out what to do with the ancient, rusty stuff, much less humiliate herself coming to the Swap hoping to unload the old while hunting for a newer model of old, fat, bald guy.

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## Calendar

### Sat. Aug. 3

→ Lakes Area Amateur Club Hamfest, 7 a.m. - 11 a.m., Lyons Town Hall, 6339 Hospital Rd., Lyons.

- ARRL August UHF contest.
- Int'l Lighthouse Lightship Contest from Aug 3, 0000Z to Aug 5, 2359Z.
- 10 10 Summer Phone QSO Party from Aug 3, 0001Z to Aug 4, 2359Z. 28 MHz

### Sun. Aug. 4

→ Cedar Valley Amateur Radio Club Swapfest, 8 a.m. - 1 p.m., Teamster's Hall, 5000 J St., SW, Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

### Tue. Aug. 6

→ Riverland Amateur Radio Club meeting, 7 p.m., Gundersen Health System, lower level meeting room 1.

### Sat. Aug. 10

- Riverland ARC Swapfest, 8 a.m. - 1 p.m., Onalaska Community Center, 515 Quincy St., Onalaska.
- Racine Megacycle Freefest, 7 a.m. to 1 p.m., Fireman's Park, 9600 Charles St., Sturtevant.

### Sat-Sun, Aug. 17-18

- ARRL North American QSO Party, SSB

### Sat. Aug. 24

→ Yellow Thunder ARC Swapfest, 8 a.m. - 1 p.m., Badger Steam and Gas Engine Property, S3347 Sand Rd, Baraboo.

### Tue. Sept. 2

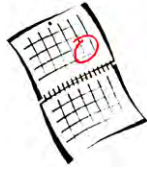
→ Riverland Amateur Radio Club meeting, 7 p.m., Gundersen Health System, lower level meeting room 1.

### Sat, Sept. 7

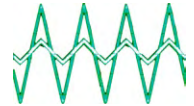
→ MVARA Mobile Antenna Shoot out, 10 a.m. - 3 p.m., Gundersen Clinic, Onalaska Campus.

### Sat-Sun, Sept. 14

- 14 16 ARRL September VHF Contest



## President's Frequency



### Modulation

By Greg Miller, KA9FOZ

Swapfest time is here again, Sat. Aug. 10, at the Onalaska Community Center. 515 Quincy St.

I remember my first Swapfest, it was 1979 in Baraboo I believe. I traveled there with my dad and Nook Bensen, K9EGO. It wasn't much larger than the swapfest we sponsor, but boy did I have fun! I don't think I bought anything that day but I sure learned a lot. I went from table to table looking at each and every item. After all I was a new ham and I needed everything. We broke for lunch and then I was back at it going through each table again checking out all the items for a second time. What an experience, my first ham fest! I bet my dad got sick of me talking about it on the way home.

I have been to many ham fests since then but none has been as fun as that first one. Life is like that you know, the first one always holds a special place in your memory banks.

Now it is swapfest time again and there will be new hams there experiencing that same feeling I had many years ago. It is our job to sure it is a good event for them. I, for one, have a lot to bring and try and sell, maybe I will buy something also. How I get it all there and set up in time is anybody's guess. But you know, one thing I have learned is you do your best and all things will work out. Maybe one of the new hams can win a door price which will make it all the more memorable. Bring your item, bring your wallet and eat the food and drink the coffee and we will all have a good time.



## VE testing for licensing

The next RARC VE testing for licensing will be Sat. Sept. 7.

The required ARRL fee remains 15.

Those wishing to test must contact Roger Reader, KA9BKK, 608 783 0723 or [readers@centurytel.net](mailto:readers@centurytel.net), to register five days in advance. No walk-ins.

The session will begin at 9 a.m. at the American Red Cross office, 2927 Losey Blvd. S., La Crosse.

### Riverland Amateur Radio Club

P.O. Box 621  
Onalaska, Wis. 54650



President ..... Greg Miller, KA9FOZ  
Vice president.... Van Elston, WA9FIO  
Treasurer..... Tom O'Brien, WB9BJQ  
Secretary..... Carl Thurston, KC9HDS  
Newsletter editor.. Bob Seaquist, KC9IWE  
Address correspondence regarding the club to Tom O'Brien, WB9BJQ, [wb9bjq@charter.net](mailto:wb9bjq@charter.net)

This newsletter is sent by e mail to current and past RARC members and others. If you wish to change your address or subscription, e mail [KC9IWE@arrl.net](mailto:KC9IWE@arrl.net)

## Operating

**CQ** Call CQ where you can be heard. This sounds pretty simple but it's advice often forgotten in the heat of battle. If your station is not a Monster of the Midway you need to be sure your signal won't be buried in noise and QRM at the receiving stations. Even if you do find what sounds like a "clear" frequency on the low end of 20, is it likely to be a clear frequency in, say, Eastern Europe? If you are a 100 watts and tribander station, calling CQ here might work but more likely you won't be able to hold the frequency. Go ahead and try but be prepared to find something higher in the band where the "other" stations can hear you more clearly.

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## Skew

As openings along polar paths remain sketchy due to low solar activity, don't forget about skew path a propagation phenomenon in which contacts can be made by aiming your antenna closer to the Equator a more easterly or westerly heading .

For a North American station, for example, a skew path opening to Japan might result in signals peaking due west or even south of west. Skew path openings can take place at frequencies below the maximum usable frequency MUF along the great circle path, which is often the case under poor propagation conditions. Turning your antenna to explore skew path propagation is a very useful technique that can make a previously inaudible signal suddenly appear and make a QSO possible.



## Ultra light dual band handy yagi

By Bob Seaquist, KC9IWE

The dark, bleak, days of late winter have me grasping for projects, dreams and any kind of available hope. So a YouTube video showing satellite QSO's had me searching for an effective, light antenna. I recalled a May 2008 QST article by Thomas Hart, AD1B, "Dual Band Handy Yagi," that showed a neat little yagi that used an HT as the director. It looked simple enough for me to build so with some ideas on modifications I searched for supplies.

Operating a satellite is very much like working the local repeater except the Ham on the other end could be hundreds, if not thousands, of miles away. You can hear the amateur radio satellites with the crummy rubber duck antenna on an HT but it takes more, like the simple yagi I describe here, to make a QSO. Hams have to know where they live on the globe so they can calculate when a satellite will make a pass and the Ham also must know something about the Doppler effect. Hart's design in QST used EZNEC modeling and assumed quarter wave elements would do well. But his 55" boom was a stout, wooden stick and the elements were 1/8" steel rod. I'd seen a YouTube video where arrow shafts and music wire worked well so I headed in

that direction.

The music wire to make the elements came from ABC Hobbies and two fiberglass arrow shafts for the boom from Ace Hardware. A bottle of



The HT mount is hardboard and some wood scraps.

little, red hobby beads completed purchases.

I epoxied the shafts and once the epoxy set measured and drilled the required holes. Then I carefully measured and cut the music wire. It comes in 36" lengths so two of the 2 meter elements required soldered splices.

The YouTube video maker wanted a collapsible backpack antenna so his elements used wire insulation to hold them in place by friction. This design easily allows that but I went for belt and suspenders security so I epoxied the elements in place. The little, red beads were epoxied to the wire ends to make them easier to see and easier not to poke one's eyes out.

The yagi seems to do a nice job improving the HT's signal for our repeater. Once I learn more about acquiring Ao 51, the only active 2 meter, 70 cm satellite, I'll find out if the rig really works.

# The Gremlins nearly won

By Carl Thurston, KC9HDS

Well here I am again. I've survived a vicious attack by the Gremlins. This time it was personal, very personal indeed. As I was getting prepared for Field Day, you know, pulling out my usual gear: an FT 897, with Opek HVT 600 antenna, and Buddipole lithium ion battery pack, things seemed to be fairly routine. Right in the middle of this it was decided that our old lawn mower had out lived its usefulness so my XYL and I went to buy a new one.

Outside of the prat falls of dealing with high tech purchasing systems at Sears, it was a relatively smooth and pleasant undertaking.

That was on Thursday, June 6. The following day as I was setting up the new mower I kept having to stop and rest as everything that I tried to do was exhausting me. Peg, my XYL, noticed this and insisted that I go to the walk in clinic to see what was the matter. I was far too weak to object to much of anything so I went along with her. Upon arrival I was met with a doctor who I had never seen before, who knew nothing of my medical history, but looking at me immediately assumed that I was having a heart attack. After all I was over weight, probably had high cholesterol, high blood pressure, and was diabetic besides, so she gave me three baby aspirin and insisted that I take a ride in an ambulance to the emergency room at Franciscan Mayo.

Again, in spite of my objections to those assumptions and my determination to not ride in an ambulance, I was both too weak and out voted by everyone around me, so I went. The E R doctor checked me over carefully, studied my medical history and came to the conclusion that I was bleeding internally. He ran a battery of tests on me and found that my hemoglobin had dropped from 13 to 7, so an IV was started that had both saline and whole blood. Next they did a CT scan on me that proved little. After that, since he still was unable to determine where I was bleeding, he admitted me to the hospital.

That was on Friday, it wasn't until Sunday when my regular doctor arrived to check on me that the truth was known. The telling symptom wasn't evident until then and even so the nurses and the two residents present had never experienced this before so they missed it, but my regular doctor knew right away what it was when entered my room. With a simple smear test he was able to prove to all in attendance that I was digesting my own blood and that in all likelihood there was a hole in my stomach where the blood was going. He ordered up an Endoscopy and that doctor found the hole and cauterized it. Furthermore, he was able to determine the cause of it. Normally I take a Tylenol product for the arthritis in my knees by

I had run out of those pills about a week prior so I was taking Aleve instead.

For most people, this would have been a reasonable choice, but for me, as it turns out, this was nearly deadly. When the doctor inspected the hole in my stomach, he found a fragment of an Aleve tablet in it. All is well now and I feel fine, but this little Smurf colored tablet was nearly my nemesis. I know, you will say, that Smurfs aren't Gremlins but after my close call, I'm not so sure. There have been far too many times that those pesky Gremlins have made a mess of things and I'm convinced that this is yet another instance of their malicious misbehavior.

Anyway, I survived yet another attack of the Gremlins and was able to participate in both the annual Minds in Motion event and also Field Day.

The weather situation at Field Day was changeable in the extreme and as a result we lost about six hours of operating time but that is another story. Suffice it to say that in general, a good time was had by all at the RARC Field Day this year as usual.



## Worked All Club Members

There is a change and some additions to the RARC's Worked All Club Members award:  
N9LK on log should be N9LZK  
Add: WF9T, NI9V, KB9BMX, and KC9ZGD.



## Running the LCC on radio

The last running of the La Crosse Chileda Classic LCC, Sat. July 6, included a contingent from the Riverland Amateur Radio Club. Members did not run the 5K or 10K, but ran the customary communications for the event. Chileda announced that this was the last running of the LCC.

The RARC participation was led by Tom O'Brien, WB9BJQ, and assisted by Kevin Holcomb, KC9ZGD, Roger Reader, KA9BKK, Carl Thurston, KC9HDS, Larry Worthington, KC9HDP, Dave Peters, KB9EWG, Bob Wilson, N9LZK, and Bob Seaquist, KC9IWE.

The club's assistance for the LCC is one of the measures required of ARRL Special Service Clubs plus it gave members a fun opportunity to key their mics and have a good breakfast afterward.