

T H E K E Y



Repeaters

146.970 PL 131.8
444.475 PL 131.8



RARC Net

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



Programs

Tues, Dec. 7, 7 p.m., RARC meeting, "Camping with HF," by Tom Peterson, KC9ECI, and Mike Baker, NØEXE; election of officers.

Tues, Jan. 4, 7 p.m., RARC Holiday Party, Schmidty's Restaurant. Social hour, 6 p.m. RSVP to Mike Mohler, w9mbm@arrl.org

Tues., Feb. 1, 7 p.m., "CW transmitter from a CFL," by Bill Wood, KE9XQ.

Tues., Mar. 2, 7 p.m., "soft ware defined radio."



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.

December program

Camping with HF

A bottle of tequila, a hammock and a marine battery are more reminiscent of a Caribbean isle, not Galesville's Decorah Mound, yet the hammock swings between trees and the tropical drinks are on a collapsible table atop southern Trempealeau County's high spot. It's the W9IDX team hard at work at the ARRL September VHF QSO Party.

The W9IDX team consists of Tom Peterson, KC9ECI, Mike Baker, NØEXE, Jim Netwal, W9UUM, and Greg Hovland, W9IKU, four local Hams who combine a love with the outdoors with their love of radio. During the warm months you may find them gathered at regional campground casually working the airwaves while having a great time with friends.

Peterson and Baker will talk about their adventures and their portable radio set ups at the Riverland Amateur Radio Club's Dec. 7 meeting.

On a June day the 'team is among the campers at Goose Island Park, south of La Crosse. Three campers are set up in a "U" adjacent to trees tall enough to be good antenna supports. Netwal fiddles with his portable multi band dipole http://w9uum.com/_mgxroot/page_10781.html and Baker is making contacts with his 5 watt Yaesu FT 817. Near the grill, Peterson is marveling



Mike Baker, NØEXE, takes a break from an HF contest while camping.

over the meal. "Steak, potatoes, sweet corn. Delicious!" he exclaims.

For the group it is low power, 5 or 10 watts, good food and the outdoors. True, Netwal's Icom IC 7000 is used for its 100 watts at times, but when the station is hauled up the wooded trails of Decorah mound, the radios are small, the batteries are small and the food is simple. There it's all about the sun rising over a fog shrouded valley.

For some images of the group's activities check out KC9ECI's YouTube channel www.youtube.com/user/ArkAngelz

Club annual meeting Dec. 7

The election of club officers, president, vice president, secretary and treasurer, will be at the Tues. Dec. 7, club meeting. Members will also set the dues amount for 2011. Currently, dues are 20.

There will be two candidates for two positions. Nominations may also be made from the floor.

RSVPs sought

Holiday party Jan. 4

The Riverland Amateur Radio Club's annual holiday party is set for 7 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 4, at Schmidty's Restaurant, 3119 State Rd., La Crosse. Social hour begins at 6 p.m.

You may order from a special menu that includes Schmidty's famous fish or beef tips.

Let Mike Mohler, W9MBM, know if you're coming by e mailing him at w9mbm@arrl.net or phoning him at 608 632 2623.



Visit the RARC Web page at <http://rarc.qth.com/> to find information about the club and links to other ham related sites.

Club members help light up La Crosse Rotary Lights



Riverland Amateur Radio Club work crews supported Rotary Lights. Left, Bill Wood, KE9XQ, and Carl Thurston, KC9HDS, pick litter and clean Riverside Park. Above, Dan Abts, AB9TS, Red Haines, WO0W, and Art Osborn, W0JDC, finish decorating a row of trees with lights. The Rotary Lights support is one of RARC's fundraising events.

SKYWARN Recognition Day Saturday, Dec. 4

The 12th Annual Skywarn Recognition Day Special Event will take place Saturday, Dec. 4, at the La Crosse National Weather Service (NWS) office. SRD is cosponsored by the ARRL and the NWS as a way to recognize the commitment made by Amateur Radio operators in helping to keep their communities safe. Amateur Radio operators are invited to visit their local participating NWS office, working as a team to contact other hams across the world throughout the event.

The La Crosse NWS office will have two stations for Hams to make contacts with other Skywarn Recognition sites. According to Todd Shea, KB9YXS, area Hams are invited for a day of making contacts, food, and conversation.

La Crosse's newest forecaster, John Wetenkamp, KB9UMX, is on shift that day so he will have time to join in.

Directions:
The La Crosse National Weather Service office is located at N2788 County Road FA, La Crosse. Due to Bliss Rd. being closed use STH 33 east from La Crosse to CTH F. Go north on F to FA and north on FA to the NWS office.

Riverland Amateur Radio Club
 P.O. Box 621
 Onalaska, Wis. 54650



President Mark Cassellius, KB9OFK
 Vice president..... Mike Mohler, W9MBM
 Treasurer..... Red Haines, WO0W
 Secretary..... Carl Thurston, KC9HDS
 Newsletter editor.. Bob Seaquist, KC9IWE
 Address correspondence regarding the club and the newsletter to Red Haines, WO0W, wo0w@arrl.net

This newsletter is sent by e mail to current and past RARC members and others. If you wish not to receive it, send a note to wo0w@arrl.net and ask that your address be deleted from the list.

Calendar

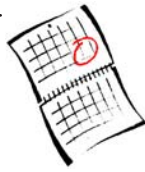
Sat., Dec. 4, Skywarn Recognition Day. NWS office, N2788 County Road FA, La Crosse.

Tues., Dec. 7, 7 p.m., RARC meeting, "Camping with HF," by Tom Peterson, KC9CI, and Mike Baker, NØEXE; election of officers.

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Tues., Mar. 2, 7 p.m., "software defined radio," by Claire Jarvis, KØNY.



Manners important

By Lee Badman, KI2K

It is worth reminding ourselves that amateur radio is all about communicating.

Sure, there is a technical hobbyist side to radio, but when the mic button is pressed it is to communicate. There are best practices that set licensed radio communications apart from "the other guys."

Foremost, amateur radio is about fellowship. Tolerance for new operators is important, and gentle guidance goes a lot further than scolding. As with any relationship, nothing sucks the fun out of the conversation more than one participant monopolizing the discussion with one "it's all about me" story after another.

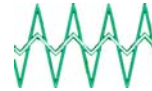
On the repeaters, it's easy to get long winded. Those who frequent the machines need to realize that towers weren't put up to provide personal therapy, and other operators can only tolerate so many long winded pontifications about your inane topics before they move on to sunnier frequencies and more interesting conversations.

On the repeater, remember the basics, leave a pause after the last operator in case someone else needs to break in with emergency traffic. Politics and religion as discussion topics are just as dicey on the repeater as anywhere, so tread lightly.

Salty language is not only in bad taste, but can rise to the level of FCC violation on the licensed bands. It's important to remember that lots of folks beyond those actually talking can potentially hear, from scanners and Internet links to radio systems.

Send news or questions to Lee Badman, KI2K, at features@syracuse.com or Stars, P.O. Box 4915, Syracuse, NY 13221.

Tech note



Portable antenna idea

By Red Haines, WOØW

Looking for a portable antenna for operating in short term field situations? Here are ideas for an antenna capable of DX communication on all the HF bands. It is moderately sturdy, designed so parts are not easily lost and no tools are needed for assembly. It fits into a bag from just over two feet long in its minimum configuration and a bag just over six feet long will contain a higher performance antenna.

It consists of a main radiator, a support stand, a matching network, and radials from parts that are readily available.

Make the main radiator of five pieces of 6063-T6 aluminum tubing from two feet to six feet long. Longer is more efficient but shorter lengths will work. Use tubing with wall thickness 0.050 inches in outside diameters from a minimum of 3/4 inch, larger if possible stepped down in 1/8 inch increments. For example, use 3/4 inch, 5/8 inch, 1/2 inch, 3/8 inch, and 1/4 inch. They will telescope with clearance; all the pieces fit into the largest one for transportation or storage. Increase the diameters in 1/8 inch increments to make the radiator stronger.

Texas Towers (www.texastowers.com/) offers 6063-T832 tubing with 0.058 inch wall. It will fit together, but not with enough clearance to nest nicely. That will require a bit more room in a bag. Five six foot pieces for a 29 foot element will cost from 36 to 46.20, plus shipping by UPS, depending upon the diameter used.

Fasten them together when extended with hitch pins, available at hardware stores and Farm Fleet. Glue colored ribbons to the pins so they aren't easily lost in the grass. If using the 0.058 inch wall thickness, you can split one end and use hose clamps instead of hitch pins.

Omit a piece for higher frequency or to use it where less height is desirable, like under a roof or in stronger wind.

Make a support of PVC pipe and fittings. Use two foot long or longer pieces at least 1/2 inch working diameter larger is better, schedule 40 for the legs. Use a cross (4-way) fitting at the center. Drill a hole through its center to accept a short piece into which the bottom of the radiator will slide. Let the legs fit into the cross without cement; just use friction to hold them or add hitch pins for greater security. Peg the ends of the legs with tent stakes with ribbons glued on for more wind resistance.

The matching network may be as simple as a tapped inductor, but an L network with a variable capacitor for quick and easy tuning is better. Mount the network on a piece of plastic to mount on the radiator with a tool clip. Mount a UHF female connector on the plastic for easy connection to a coax plug.

A top hat may be added to improve performance on the lower frequencies without adding much to the weight or bulk.

If this piques your interest but you want more details, contact Haines, WOØW at redhaines@acegroup.cc or 507 894 4513.

Learning more about what's in a name

By Carl Thurston, KC9HDS

Some of you by now have heard part of the "Seneca Saga." Believe me, it isn't over yet! In the last episode, the Mohican had arrived and as I waited for the manual for it to also appear, I discovered that the Heathkit GC 1A Mohican covers nearly every shortwave band. I say nearly, as I found out that it does not cover the very bands needed to make it a companion to the Seneca, namely the 2 meter and 6 meter bands. How could this have happened? Why did I think that this was the right receiver for use with the Seneca? Who told me that this was what was needed? Somewhere back in the foggy recesses of my brain I distinctly recall someone saying that the Mohican was the best choice to mate with the Seneca. At least that's what I think I heard someone say. Or did they say the Mohawk was the best? As it turns out, the receiver that was supposed to go with the Seneca was the Heathkit RX 1 Mohawk. Why this mix up happened, is anybody's guess. Who would have thought that there would be two receivers made by the same company with such similar names? Looking back on this whole



fiasco, it is real easy to see how this could happen.

To some, a Mohawk and a Mohican are the same, but anyone with a little knowledge of Indian tribal history would know that this definitely is not the case; in fact the Mohawks and the Mohicans were deadly enemies. So who was the bright boy at Heathkit that came up with these names? There is no real way of knowing, as like so much of history, it appears to be lost to the ages.

None of the other models of Heathkit that bear tribal names can be confused. No one would confuse the Heathkit Apache with the Heathkit Comanche or either of those radios with the Seneca, so why would any sane person name two receivers that are so vastly different with names that are so similar? I have to believe that whoever it was had a very twisted sense of humor. Either that or that person had a very

short memory and didn't recall that a similar name had already been used when the later of the two similarly named receivers was named.

All of that gets me nowhere. I still do not have a receiver to go with my Seneca. A quick scan of eBay shows me that there are a couple of Heathkit RX 1 Mohawks out there, but with starting bids of 200 they are quickly out of my range. Perhaps I will find one at a swap meet somewhere, or one might materialize on my doorstep like the case for the Seneca did. That could happen but I'm not holding my breath. It is nearing Christmas and there may be another visit by three wise men carrying one, or maybe Santa Claus will bring me one in his bag.

Meanwhile, like so many older radios, the Mohican only hums, so I'm working on it. After all, it is a fine example of the cutting edge technology of 1959, so it deserves to be restored and cherished. Besides, I don't seem to have anything else going on at the moment and my knee is limiting my movements, so it may be a therapeutic exercise that will benefit us both.