

# THE KEY



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.

**Nominations** for club officers will be accepted from the floor at the December meeting.

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



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Riverland Amateur Radio Club members and others participated in the 2011 Skywarn Recognition Day at the La Crosse National Weather Service Office.

## Skywarn Recognition operations Dec. 7

If the weather doesn't shut it out like it did in 2007 and 2010, the La Crosse National Weather Service NWS will host Skywarn Recognition Day Saturday, Dec. 7. It's for amateur radio operators who help support storm spotting and relay critical severe weather information. Visiting and operation hours are between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. that day.

Amateur radio operators have an opportunity provided by the Riverland Amateur Radio Club to operate radios from the La Crosse NWS office, making contacts with other amateur radio operators around the world and other NWS forecast offices around the country.

Skywarn Recognition Day was developed in 1999 by the National Weather Service

and the American Radio Relay League. It celebrates the contributions that volunteer Skywarn radio operators make to the NWS.

Last year Hams at the La Crosse National Weather Service station made 274 contacts including 36 other NWS offices. Three HF radios were used during the event to make contacts around North America. Attendance at NWS La Crosse was outstanding with 37 people visiting or assisting during the day. A majority of those who helped were from the La Crosse area, but there were visitors from Richland, Trempealeau, Vernon, and Crawford Counties in Wisconsin, and Olmsted, Winona, Wabasha, and Fillmore Counties in Minnesota.

The event web page is [www.wrwb.noaa.gov/mtr/hamradio/](http://www.wrwb.noaa.gov/mtr/hamradio/)



## President's Frequency

### Modulation

By Greg Miller, KA9FOZ

Sometimes I think, "Should I write about why I be came a ham?" But then I realize there are many reasons why, one of which is the friendships that I have devel oped over the years. So I better hold that for another time.



Then I think "should I write about RF in the shack?" But what do I know about having Real Fun in the shack? When I am in the shack I get right down to business.

Then I think "should I write about receiver sensitiv ity?" But all I know about that is how sensitive my 2 meter radio was when I dropped it on the cement

floor. I am pretty sensitive about that too.

Then I think "should I write about sun spots and how much they matter?" I tried to get that answer when I saw several sun spots at the nursing home the other day. I felt pretty stupid when they told me they were liver spots and told me to get out. So, by pass that subject.

Then I think "should I write about liver spots?" No, this is a Ham club.

Then I think "should I write about soldering tech nique?" Now there is something I could get some information on, after all I have a son in the Army and he could give me...What? Oh, sorry, it has nothing to do with the military.

Then I think "should I write about vertical and hori zontal antennas?" I had a vertical antenna that went horizontal once, didn't help my SWR, what ever that is. Skip that subject too.

Then I think "should I write about what bands are best at what times?" When I think of this the Beatles come to mind, YA YA YA.

Then I think "should I write about some social fun?" I am too ornery for that.

Then I think "should I write about portable set ups?" Now there we go, I put up a portable set up in my back yard, flushes just like a real toilet. Now we can have some real social fun.

So because I could not come up with anything to write about I have nothing so I will not have a column this month, maybe next month.

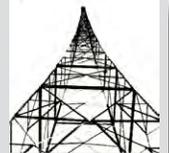
**Christmas Party**  
 Mark your calendars for the  
**Riverland Amateur Radio  
 Club's Christmas Party**  
**Tuesday, Jan. 7. It will be at  
 Schmidy's with social hour at  
 6 p.m. and dinner at 7 p.m.**  
**Fish and beef tips served  
 family style for \$12.99.**

## Net Note

The RARC's Sunday Night Net will have a new sound: mics keying!

Net Control Stations will encourage check ins to weigh in on subjects of interest to Amateur Radio Operators.

The Sunday Night Net is at 8 p.m. on the 146.97 PL 131.8 repeater. All licensed Amateurs are welcome.



## For sale:

The club has two more PCs for sale. Contact Carl Thurston, KC9HDS, at 608 783 2261 or [aztech\\_computer@juno.com](mailto:aztech_computer@juno.com) for details.

## Riverland Amateur Radio Club

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

## Still a thrill making contacts

By Bob Seaquist, KC9IWE

It's a thrill making contacts over the air, connecting with someone in a distant location and getting to know them a bit. I never tire of hearing another Ham call "CQ" and then responding to me when I transmit my call. It is stunning that I am heard over the cacophony of the bands. Yet there it is, some guy repeating my call and even saying that my signal is an honest "5 9."

For me it is chocolate cake. If I'm home I yell to the XYL that I just talked with someone in you name the locale. She is polite about it but clearly does not appreciate the miracle of it all.

Putting frosting on that cake means making those contacts on a beautiful summer day from a pretty hilltop using a homemade antenna and an itty bitty radio.

On one such August afternoon I grabbed the gear and headed to Grand dad Bluff Park, approximately 590 feet above the city and 1,183 feet above sea level. The Buddipole went up as a Bud distick vertical tuned for 40 meters. It took a little fiddling around with the counterpoise to get it right but it was easy. The chair slid from its bag and the



KC9IWE trying to make Qs on his QRP radio.

radio chirped quickly into action.

Hmmmm....just static. The band was just noise and no signal. Same thing on 20! I looked around mentally going down the checklist starting with "is it plugged in?" Nope! The coax' BNC connector was all by itself not connected to a darn thing.

Plugged in, the antenna magically lit the radio with babble, much of it seemingly from the Ohio QSO Party.

A guy called "CQ" and I answered. Lo and behold, he came right back! And

another! It was Christmas, the Fourth of July and my birthday all in a few minutes! Five watts of me snagging all these stations! FIVE WATTS!

The Ohio guys and a Kansas Ham as well uniformly gave good signal reports as well as expressing surprise and some suspicion when I said it was a QRP signal.

I've never had a real Elmer. True, everyone I've asked has been helpful, but if anyone would qualify

as my Elmer it'd be Steve Galchatt, WGØAT, on his many YouTube videos. He's famous for hiking to the mountain tops near his Colorado home and making contacts with little, bitty radios. He's probably more famous for packing his gear on his pet goats, Peanut and Rooster and featuring them in the videos. I made contact with WGØAT once. It was a brief 4 4 but a contact nonetheless.

Ham radio is as exciting for me now as it was back in 1958 when I first took La Crosse Radio Club license classes.

## RARC & Rotary Lights

Rotary Lights Parade Nov. 29 included a unit representing the Riverland Amateur Radio Club. Small children, a "fire," lights and "It's A Wonderful Life" projected on the club trailer made for a bright unit.

Participation in Rotary Lights is a fundraiser and a public service activity for the club.

Greg Miller, KA9FOZ, prepared and operated the parade float. Carl Thurston, KC9HDS, directed decorating of the Christmas tree and Dan Abts, AB9TS, chaired the club's participation.

Groups participating in Rotary Lights must have a decorated Christmas tree, be in the parade and volunteer on site.

Our assignment this year was to work Nov. 30 on a standby basis to do what needs to be done at that time.



# As the end of the year draws near

By Carl Thurston, KC9HDS

There have been many good things that have happened this year. All things in the outside world aside, the local Ham radio groups have had an excellent year. The level of cooperation has increased as was evident in the attendance and participation in the annual SkyWarn Recognition Day held this December at the National Weather Service office on top of Granddad Bluff. The relaxed and comfortable atmosphere was gratifying. When ever a diverse group of Hams can get together and operate efficiently something magical happens. All of the things that have stood in the way of mutual friendship just melted away and everyone had a great time. Todd Shea was a fine host, allowing us to utilize the facilities at the National Weather Service for the event and furnishing lots of goodies and beverages for all to enjoy, as well. That event ended last year, but also started this year's activities. This may seem like a paradox, but due to the gap between our fall activities and our looking forward to spring, the SkyWarn Recognition day helps to keep things going as we look forward to spring and the joys of Field Day.

The next event was our Christmas Party that is always held in January, and for the last several years it took place at Schmidy's Restaurant, a most agreeable place for the Hams to gather and enjoy a nice family style meal and the fantastic door prizes that President Greg Miller, KA9FOZ procures for distribution. All

members, past and present are always welcome to this party. There is no need to make a reservation as there is always room and plenty of food to go around.

The cold, cold days of winter keep most Hams close to home, but a few brave souls do venture out to Winter Field Day. This year it was held at the National Weather Service and was a bit of deja vu after the SkyWarn Recognition Day at the same location. It was fun, just the same with a good turn out of stalwart Hams.

Winter continued on and there was little going on other than our monthly meetings. Fortunately, the Gremlins seemed to be frozen out as well, and there was little trouble in the shack. Many Hams remained close to home and warmed the air in their shacks with RF. Some put the time to good use, repairing old equipment, building new projects, or reading up on new techniques. All of the while everyone was looking forward to spring and Field Day.

When Field Day finally came, it was it at Greg's QTH again this year. It is turning out to be a nearly ideal location for this event. Like last year, the turn out was good, the refreshments ample and delicious. The only problem came when a terrific storm blew in with lots of rain, wind and lightning that cut severely into out operating time. About six hours were spent hunkering down and trying to stay dry. All in all though, it was a successful event with good



camaraderie and a lot of helpful hands to help clean up the mess left by the storm.

The event that was the most enjoyable to some was our annual Ham Radio Swapfest. It continues to be a totally free event, with lots of good door prizes. The only criticism of this event was the comments about how this event really needs to be in a larger venue, as it is outgrowing the Onalaska Community Center. Yes, the warmth and brotherhood was a welcome thing to behold. It is just too bad that those in our government who should be concerned with working together aren't as willing to come together for a common cause like our local Swapfest.

And on to SkyWarn Recognition Day once more. A very good year to be a Ham.

## Calendar

### Tue Dec 3

→ Riverland Amateur Radio Club, 7 p.m., Gundersen Lutheran, La Crosse. Elmer session at 6 p.m. Nominations for club officers.

### Sat Dec 7

→ Skywarn Recognition Day, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m., National Weather Service, N2788 County Road FA, La Crosse.



## QRM

Regardless of our best efforts, there will be QRM at times but don't let it get to you. I may be frustrated that a festival at my favorite park brings the crowds but I know next weekend they'll be gone and calm will return. In turn, I can also recognize that my own gatherings and games may crowd my neighbors a bit as well. But on the air I am willing to adjust, use my know how, and make the most of things, even in the midst of bombastic pageants near and far.