

THE KEY

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



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

Repeater
146.970 PL 131.8

RARC Net
8 p.m. Sundays on the
146.970 repeater.

Club meetings
7 p.m., Tuesday, meet
ing room 1, lower level,
Gundersen/Lutheran La
Crosse. **Elmer session** 6
p.m.

RARC Web page
<http://rarc.qth.com/>

Club lights up the community

The Riverland Amateur Radio Club's tree (right) at La Crosse's Rotary Lights was decorated by Dan Abts, AB9TS, and his granddaughter. Abts chairs the club's Rotary Lights effort which is a fundraiser for the club as well as important community involvement for the RARC.

The club also participates in the Rotary Lights parade, Nov. 27, (below) with a float. Kevin Holcomb, KC9ZDG, piloted the unit.

Volunteers for Saturday morning's clean-up at Rotary Lights included: Abts, Holcomb, Tom O'Brien, WB-9BJQ, Art Osborn, W0JDC, Roger Reader, KA9BKK, Bob Seaquist, W9LSE, Carl Thurston, KC9HDS, and Bill Wood, KE9XQ .



H O L I D A Y
PARTY
 6 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 5,
 Schmidty's,
 3119 State Rd, La Crosse.

President's Frequency Modulation

By Greg Miller, KA9FOZ

Our December meeting will mark the end of my presidency for the Riverland Amateur Radio Club; it will be the changing of the guard, so to speak. The last four years have been a challenge at times but also a good learning experience. Through that time I have acquired new friendships and new skills related to radio. It is time for someone new to come in and make improvements based on their new ideas. As I leave I am seeing a slight uptick in the interest in the club so it is time for someone new to run with that uptick and improve on it. As always, the outgoing Executive Members will still be there to help in any way they can. This club has been going strong since 1972 when it became affiliated with the ARRL and I am sure it will continue long into the future. I want the members to know that I still will be working with certain aspects of the club, such as the Swapfest. I may even help out in other areas of the club now that I am more in the background. I also want to thank club members for their help and support over these past four years. It has been a pleasure to serve all of you while in this position.

One thing I have already started to do is get back into turning the radio on and making contacts on HF, checking into a net regularly and surfing the bands for CQ's. I also plan on hitting the books a little more and try and learn some things that have eluded me.

So we enter the final month of 2015 with the club meeting falling on the first. The weather has been great for this time of year so making the club meeting will not be hard. Election night should be well attended so you can vote for the new officers. They will guide your club going forward and all should have a say in that.

I hope all of you had a great Thanksgiving and I want to say Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. See you at the December meeting and the January Holiday Dinner.

With that, I say 73 with my last President's Frequency Modulation.

Calendar

Tue. Dec. 1

↪ Riverland Amateur Radio Club meeting, 7 p.m., LL Conf 1, Gundersen Clinic, 7th & South Ave., La Crosse. Election of officers. "Elmer" session, 6 p.m.

Sat. Dec. 5

↪ Skywarn Recognition Day, 8 a.m. - 4 p.m., National Weather Service Office, N2788 County Road FA, La Crosse. www.wrh.noaa.gov/mtr/hamradio/

Sat.-Sun. Dec. 12-13

↪ ARRL 10 Meter Contest. www.arrl.org/10_meter

Sun. Jan. 3

↪ Kids Day, Kids Day gives young people on the air experience and provides a chance to interest them in getting a license of their own. www.arrl.org/kids_day.

Tue. Jan. 5

↪ Riverland Amateur Radio Club Holiday Party, 5 p.m., social hour, 6 p.m. dinner, Schmidty's, 3119 State Rd, La Crosse.

Sat.-Sun. Jan. 30-31

↪ Winter Field Day, 1700 UTC - 11 a.m. Saturday to 1700 UTC - 11 a.m. Sunday. www.winterfieldday.com/



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, W9LSE

Address correspondence regarding the club to Tom O'Brien, WB9BJQ, wb9bjq@charter.net



WISCONSIN RADIO AMATEUR HERALD

Donald J. Stenz, K9KSA
144 Kent Street
Wausau, Wisconsin 54401

LA CROSSE ARC

Rick Davis WA9ZAZ writes that the Signal One is still laid up and will be sold after fixin' so brother SUU Scott and he can get separate rigs.

Elections will be held Nov 20 at LaX Naval Reserve. (W9PJ, K9NAX). Present officers are;
President: WA9LYY Paul Van Tol
Secretary: W9GGY Orlin Hanson
Treasurer: K9CUT Bruce Bjerstadt

Lots of 2 meter AM activity with 25 - 30 hams on every weekend with only MARS on FM.



Skywarn recognition day operations at the La Crosse National Weather Service office.

Winter Field Day possibilities Jan. 30

Just when you thought you were cold enough, Winter Field Day emerges from the ice reminding you that disaster communication isn't always in nice, warm, summer weather. This year it's scheduled to run 11 a.m. Sat. Jan. 30 through 11 a.m. Sun. Jan. 31.

Members of the Riverland Club have participated and shivered in Winter Field Day since 2010 when the club trailer provided shelter from frosty winds on Granddad Bluff.

The event struggled nationally last year because members of the sponsoring organization, SPAR, were in disarray. This year there's a new Winter Field Day Association WFDA a group of Hams interested in winter emergency communications as well as those in warmer times of the year.

Winter Field Day will enhance the important skills of Amateurs that are interested in year 'round emergency communication.

Disasters are unpredictable and can strike when you least expect them. WFDA's goal is to help enhance Amateurs' skills for all environmental conditions found in the US and Canada.

Preparedness is the key to a professional and timely response during any event and this is what local and state authorities expect when they reach out for Hams' assistance.

For more information go to www.winterfieldday.com/

Skywarn event Sat., Dec. 5

There should be clear skies and warm operating conditions for this year's Skywarn Recognition Day Saturday, Dec. 5. The National Weather Service uses the event to recognize the efforts of amateur radio operators in Skywarn.

Todd Shea, KB9YXS, Warning Coordination Meteorologist, promises to have stations operating from the La Crosse office, attempting contacts around the US. Hams in the office's 14 county service area are invited to participate by visiting the La Crosse NWS office, N2788 County Road FA, La Crosse, and operating the radios as well as socializing.

The event will run from 8 a.m.-4 p.m. Tours of the NWS office will be available and there will be snacks all day. For more information visit www.wrb.noaa.gov/mtr/bamradio/

Scout for new radio contesting talent

By Brian Moran, N9ADG

Participation in contests may be a good way for public services team members to keep skills sharp, and keep operating interesting.

Thinking about it another way, we as contesters may find public service teams a good place to find new contest operators!

Every club could use a few more points in inter club competitions, yet at the same time, for some clubs, phone contests have less participation than CW contests. Viewing a phone contest as a recruiting and elmering event could be a win win under utilized stations get utilized, the club gets

more points, and there are more potential testers.

Finding hams involved in public service doesn't have to be difficult. Talk with those who do public service. Or share your enthusiasm for contesting by presenting at other radio clubs. There are relevant synergies between contesting and public service operating, which could be the basis of a presentation.

Listen to local VHF nets to hear who you'd like to recruit. You already know that they're active, so they're great potential candidates.

A time to be thankful

By Carl Thurston, KC9HDS

It is hard at times to be positive about things. Especially when so much of the world is in chaos. The recent events that have been dominating the news is frightful. The local news has been anything but encouraging, but it is nothing compared to the national and world news. As Hams, we are much more aware of the global aspect of events than most. Yes, we try not to dwell on the things that are going wrong. To see the positive side of things is not always easy, and to converse with a Ham in a country that is experiencing unbelievable hardships is a difficult thing to do, but it is often the case that such conversations take place and the resulting QSO can lift the spirits as well as soften the harshness of reality. Some can not deal with such situations. They turn away or write off what is happening as not of interest to them. Some react in a verbally violent manner that may vent some personal steam but does little to address the real issues of life. Some say that this sort of thing never happened when they were younger. Some say that what is happening is because that is the way that it is and there isn't anything that can be done about it. Most of these views do little to help anyone. They tend to be either the result of apathy or ignorance. It seems that there are those who use the lack of awareness of world events as a cop out, perhaps to protect themselves from the

grim realities around them.

To dwell further on the negative side of events, may reflect current reality, and to do otherwise may be difficult, but to survive and proceed forward, a positive attitude is needed. So although things seem dark, it is best to remember all of the good things that we enjoy. Whether they are the simple things like a sunny day, crisp fresh air, taking your dog for a walk, or spending quality time with friends and family. There is so much that we all can be thankful for. No matter what fate has dealt you personally, there is always something to be thankful for. As Americans, we have been blessed with our wonderful country, that alone could be enough. Beyond that we as Hams have much to be grateful for, with our ability to reach out to other countries as good will ambassadors, we are in a unique position to contact and converse via the HF bands with Hams of other lands regardless of any differences that might exist. With the freedom that we enjoy, it is easy to forget that not everyone everywhere has that privilege, but we do try to bridge the gap between ourselves and those in other countries.

We do bemoan our problems at times, like difficulties with antennas, our rigs, or the repeater. These seem to be of little import in the grand scheme of things. When these things give us trou-



ble, it makes us all the more thankful when they are working the way that they were intended to work. These are things that we often take for granted, like good health, open bands, and friends who care. Things are generally going well and that is something to be thankful too.

Should Amateur Radio operators be called upon to help in times of need, like severe storms, fires, hazardous accidents; all will be thankful for their involvement.

Be extra thankful that no emergency took place this year, and with luck, nothing will happen in the coming year either. Thanks to all who have helped others when they needed help the most. Hams are always eager to lend a helping hand, and their service is always greatly appreciated by those who they have helped. We all have much to be thankful for, so take some time to reflect about all of the things in your life that you are blessed with and express that thought with your friends and family this holiday season.

ARRL 10 meter contest open to all Hams

A great way to fill a chilly December weekend with Ham radio fun is the ARRL 10 Meter Contest Dec. 12-13. A perennial favorite with many operators, the ARRL 10 Meter Contest is again poised to make a splash on the highest of the HF bands. Conditions on 10 are always surprising; tuning around there seems to be nothing, yet when you call there's always a response and it could be from half way around the world!

The 10 meter band, of course, is special in that it features Technician class phone privileges from 28.300 to 28.500. As such, many operators new to contesting and new to HF operating will be able to take part in the contest and even be competitive. This is a tremendous opportunity for veteran

operators to serve as Elmers to the contesters of tomorrow.

The band is special for all operators. Its reach is tremendous and when there's an event like the 10 Meter Contest it is nothing less than sizzling.

There has been an increase in multioperator stations. A few teams were comprised entirely of new operators—a trend indicative of the continued popularity of HF in many communities. If you have a station capable of 10 meter operation, consider opening your shack door to those without such capabilities. Hosting a multioperator effort can be a very rewarding experience.

Bob's towering success

By Bob Seaquist, W9LSE



For some time my Ham radio experience has involved shovels, wheelbarrows, fence post drivers and some solder but no RF. I am now back on the air - first contacts were a Dutch Ham in Bonaire and a Cuban

after a lot of planning, a lot of spending, a lot of worrying, help from a couple buddies and a sign company crane. The World Headquarters of W9LSE finally has a real tower, a real antenna and some real RF.

I had an ancient TV mast from my wife's parent's home for more than a decade. It was from the early 1950s, a lightweight, telescoping structure that apparently extended about 35'. I was terrified raising it above 20' but that was enough for a 2m/70cm antenna and a G5RV in inverted Vee. It died of rust last spring; the creaky, frail old tower teetered on two legs, though only one of the two was any

good. I hastily took it down. That ended all my HF operations for the past several months.

Lightning struck in the form of a zillion volts of real lightning blasting the Winona home of Tom Mauszycki, KAØM LO. His insurance company bought him a brand new beam and a huge home remodeling and his charity gave me his undamaged HyGain five element, three band beam and a really big 2m beam. I dismantled the beams and hauled them home, storing them in the garage until I could find a decent tower.

As fate would have it, I found a Rohn HBX tower for sale. It is a nice tower but it turns out not to have the wind load capacity I needed. Back to searching and planning.

Wind load, grounding, construction, and safety were among many things I learned in the process of putting up a useful tower. Absolutely my best purchases have been two books, ARRL's "Antenna Towers For Radio Amateurs," and Steve

Morris', K7LXC, "Up The Tower." They provided guidance and considerations for an important and expensive project. It would have been very easy to buy a used Rohn 25, the "standard" for Hams, and put it up. The serious VERY SERIOUS questions of "will it remain standing?" "Is it legal?" and "What about lightning?" would not be answered.

Both books are very cautious about used towers because of potential structural problems not to mention going to someone's home and trying to safely dismantle an old tower. I know it is a violation of Ham law to buy something new but I decided it is a once in the lifetime purchase. I also decided it should be safe: no more used, rusty steel, no more threats of lightning zapping my gear, no more fear of a tower falling into my neighbor's bedroom.

The tower had to be self supporting because I have no place to put guy wires and it had to be 45' or less because of city zoning regulations. Additionally, it had to withstand at least 10 square feet of wind loading. After some shopping I summoned some courage and coughed up some lots of cash and ordered a brand new, aluminum Universal 40' tower.

If only the process would be so easy that you could just order a tower. But "no." With Ham radio, some adult assembly is required. Like pouring a 7,000 lbs concrete base, driving many ground rods plus bonding the grounding to the home's ground, getting coax to fit and more.

But first....there was the old Sakcrete base to remove. Too heavy to dig out, a rental jackhammer was required.

For your future reference, rental jackhammers are awkward, heavy and heavy and awkward.

Two hours of chopping away the old block damn near killed me - I was way too weak to even call first responders for help. The revenges of age and conditioning hit me like a brick propelled by a jackhammer : professional help was required! I possibly could have soldiered on and saved some money but common sense and some Ben Franklins brought Wellendorf Contractors of La Crescent to the scene excavating a foundation, setting forms and pouring the 7,000 lbs of concrete.

The four foot cube of concrete took a month to cure so I used the time to make up coax, rehab a used rotor and controller and asked lots of questions.

Greg Miller, KA9FOZ, gave a very good piece of advice when he said he used Coulee Sign Company's crane to lift his tower and antennas. It is either that or three old, fat, bald guys struggling with 45' of aluminum topped with lots more aluminum.

The crane came, it slowly lifted this lovely structure to its base and all was good! A few connections, a lot of cleaning to satisfy the wife and the radio went on. The first two contacts, both calling on the first time, were with a Dutch Ham vacationing in Bonaire and then a Ham living in Havana, Cuba!

It worked!!!



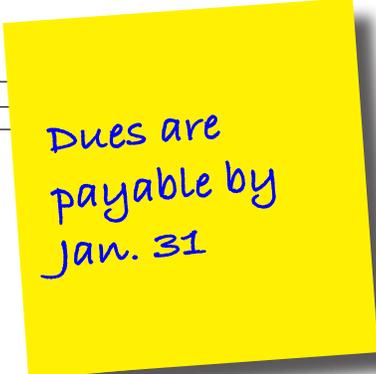
Riverland Amateur Radio Club Membership

First Name _____ Last Name _____ Call _____
Street _____
City _____ State ____ Zip _____
Phone _____ Cell _____
Email _____

Member dues \$20
or
Family membership dues \$25 (covers all members of immediate family in the household)

Names and call signs (if any) of family members

Contributions for special projects or general operations \$ _____
Dedicated purpose _____
(Contributions may be applied to tax deductions)



 **Total dues and contributions enclosed \$** _____

Return this form and a check to the treasurer at the January club meeting or mail it to:

RARC
Box 621
Onalaska,
Wisconsin 54650

My interests include:

Public Service DX Construction Boat Anchors QRP Ragchew

Suggest program topics that would interest you, that you could present, or persons who possibly could make presentations.

