

THE KEY

Official Journal of The Riverland Amateur Radio Club



The Riverland Amateur Radio Club is a Special Service Club affiliated with the American Radio Relay League. The club is active in community service as well as actively promoting Amateur Radio in the Coulee Region. The Club is open to all who are interested in Amateur Radio and will help unlicensed persons become licenses thru the FCC.

Mitch and Holiday Lights

**Riverland
Amateur Radio
Club**
P.O. Box 621
Onalaska, WI.
54636

Repeater
146.970 PL 131.8

RARC Net
8:00 PM Sunday
night on the
146.970 Repeater

Club Meetings
Trustee Meeting
3rd Monday of the
month at King
Street Kitchen at
5:00 PM, all club
members are
welcome.

Program evening is
1st Tuesday of the
month at 7:00 PM,
Gunderson Clinic
conference room 1
in the lower level.

With the Holidays looming in the distance, it was only fitting to combine a presentation of Holiday Lights and a trip down memory lane with Mitch Schultz WBOGKH. So it was at the November meeting of the RARC. Always eager to have someone from outside the club to come in and do a presentation, it was especially nice to have one done by my old Teacher from Western Technical College. It has been many years since I last sat in one of Mitch's classes on AC/DC Circuits. It all came rushing back when he agreed to do this talk on Holiday Lights. It was especially relevant since we will be working on Rotary Lights right after Thanks Giving.



It has been a while since Mitch's last appearance before the RARC in fact, it has been so long, that many of the current members were not even members when he gave his last talk about Basic Electronics, which he presented several years ago. So when Mitch offered to give this talk, it was both a surprise and a delight, but he was very mysterious as to the topic of his talk. He only said that it would be of interest to everyone at this time of year.

We had a very large turn out for this event as it was also our annual Nomination night, so a lot of members who seldom attend were in attendance this meeting. Our usual attendance is around 10 or 12, but on this occasion, there were 16 Hams present. That's nearly half of the entire membership of the RARC. I can't recall a time when we had such a large turn out.

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"When we wake up in the morning we are faced with choices. Go with the norm, or choose to stand out. Choose to be the one that blazes the trail. Success comes in many forms, but none of them are spawned from stagnation or lack of trying. Do not be afraid to step out of that box. Mistakes are nothing more than tools of learning. Do what no one else is doing. If they make 10 phone calls then you make 20. Hard work can seem like punishment, but the reward that is realized is worth the time and effort. Choose to own this day and it will be yours. Have a great day and dare to be different." - A quote by Justin W. Wolcott

As I read that quote I was thinking about our club and the word stagnation. Not that our club has reached the stagnation phase but that I feel I have. I have not brought new ideas to the club recently so it is time for me to take a step back and watch new volunteers take the club to new levels. So now is the time for club members to step forward at the December meeting and put their name in the hat for a trustee appointment and bring out those new ideas for the club.

I will still be there in support and maybe with an article or two. Merry Christmas to all!!



Riverland Amateur Radio Club
PO Box 621
Onalaska, WI 54650

President.....Kevin Holcomb, KC9ZGD
Vice-President.....Dan Abts, AB9TS
Secretary.....Rick Kolter, KD9GVS
Treasurer.....Greg Miller, K9LEC
Trustee.....Carl Thurston, KC9HDS
Trustee.....Roger Reader, KA9BKK
Trustee.....Bill Wood, KE9XQ
Newsletter Editor.....Greg Miller, K9LEC

The Key is published monthly and e-mailed to members and friends of the Riverland Amateur Radio Club. Address any correspondence to: Greg Miller at k9lec@arrl.net.



Test dates for 2019 for any new licenses or up grades.

February 9

May 4

September 7

November 9

Register 5 days in advance with Roger Reader, KA9BKK, 608-783-0723 or readers@centurtytel.net.

December 1...Skywarn Appreciation Day at the NWS office on Grand Dad Bluff.

December 2...Sunday Night net on the 146.97 repeater at 8:00 PM. Net control is Greg, k9lec.

December 4...Program night, election of the Trustees for 2019.

December 9...Sunday Night net on the 146.97 repeater at 8:00 PM. Net control is Rick, kd9gvs.

December 16...Sunday Night net on the 146.97 repeater at 8:00 PM. Net control is Kevin, kc9zgd.

December 23...Sunday Night net on the 146.97 repeater at 8:00 PM. Net control is Mark, kb9ofk.

December 30...Sunday Night net on the 146.97 repeater at 8:00 PM. Net control is David, kd9epn.

January 8...RARC Christmas Dinner at Schmitty's Restaurant. Cocktails at 5:30, dinner at 6:00 PM.



After the formalities of the Nomination process were completed. Mitch took center stage and proceeded to deliver an open, friendly and extremely informative talk on the subject of Holiday Lights.

He came with hand outs showing detailed drawings of the typical circuitry of light strings, containing both 50 and 100 lights and how they are similar and how they differ. His explanation of the reasons why these lights work and how to troubleshoot them when they are not working was very beneficial, as everyone there where aware of how difficult it can be to solve the problem when a string of lights appear to be dead.

With most of these light strings, when one or two lamps burn out, the string of lights will continue to light up because when a lamp burns out a small shunt in the base of that lamp closes and the current that is conducted through the string will continue to flow.

Normally a 50 lamp string will have a voltage of 120 volts AC divided by the 50 lamps is equal to approximately 2.4 volts AC, so when one lamp burns out and the shunt closes, each lamp then will carry 120 volts AC divided by 49 or about 2.5 volts AC. This continues as lamps burn out, thus incrementally increasing the load on each lamp until the maximum current and voltage exceed the amount that the combined remaining lamps can handle, at which point, they all go out. If that happens, it is very difficult to determine which lamps are bad. For this reason, if it is observed that one or two lamps are burned out, it is a good idea to change them out immediately so that a total burn out doesn't occur.

All of this made perfect sense, and the explanation, along with the drawings Mitch made on the white board made it clear what happens with these series circuits. Like so many lectures that I had experienced when I was Mitch's student, he covered the subject well and made it both informative and entertaining. Thanks Mitch, your presentation was fantastic and everyone liked it. You make seemingly complex things simple to understand.



k-ONE Last Good Question

Dennis Marandos – K1LGQ



A few years ago I went on a hike in the spring time of New Hampshire and this is the result of wanting to be outside.

What a difference 90 days can make! It wasn't that long ago we were looking out our windows and pleading with the snow gods to give us a break, and finally our cries were heard. The temperatures, the blue skies, the winds were all in our favor and I can't even remember what it was like with four-foot levels of bleached, hard bursts, hoarfrosts in our front yards and drifts even higher. Well, we would much prefer to forget last winter than try to remember forging paths to the house garage, the grocery stores, to work or simply just getting our mail in the front yard--but look at it now. The sun is higher in the sky, the temps are thirty to forty degrees warmer than before, and the winds have shifted, a bit, for us to say "We're in pig (HAM) heaven!" What does all this lead up to you say? It's nature calling us to get out of the stale-air shack and into our "get-off-our-fanny" modes (BIC-butt in chair)...including hiking, camping, biking and just plan QRP along the mountain paths. Yes, it's the call of the CONTINUOUS WAVE!

I have been waiting all winter for the warmer spring months so I could pack my QRP gear into my knapsack, charge up the ole gel-cell, Lith-ion batteries and retune my throw-up dipoles to GET ON THE AIR. I have a small 7-amp gel-cell which is pretty much all anyone needs along with thin, copper wire to fling on to the nearest tree limb to get the RF into the ionosphere. A quick and grubby antenna tuner will certainly do the job plus it's pocket size which means not a lot of space/weight occupied in the QRP bag. Overall, it's pretty easy and if you're thinking you have to do a lot to visit Mother Nature's playground in her best, you're wrong. Outdoor operating is now easier than it has ever been, and I am going to tell you why.

First off, operating QRP means you take the least favorable weight, carry less with you, and enjoy what you have, plus a little snack-lunch just in case. Five watts, or less, is pretty slim-pickings and to throw an antenna into a tree is the least of your hardships, but getting outside into the woods, the parks, the BACK YARD is going to be your toughest struggle. Where can I go? Who can I go with? How much gear do I need? Do I need to bring food, coffee, or snacks where I am headed? OH COME ON! We're talking simply getting outside and into the sun and on the air!

I have built over two dozen QRP transceivers and perhaps as many antennas as well for the trickiest, highest trees I could find. What you need is simply a low power rig that can be easily driven by six or eight double-AA batteries, or even a Lith-ion alone will get you on the air and you're in attendance. Have you checked the pages of **CQ** magazine or **QST** to see who is selling QRP transceivers? Or better and easier, 'Goggle' QRP kits on your computer and you'll find a utopia in front of you. QRP is now the rage across the country and world. Come on, the longer, brighter, sunshine days are here and you need to get moving before that cool breeze from the north comes visiting again. Not to worry, it'll be a while, so warm up the soldering iron and burn some rosin. Just target the "al fresco" rig and get moving. By the way, bring your key, paper and chronographic meter as well.

What does it take to get you moving? Okay, let's suppose someone offered you fifty dollars to join him on a hike. Now, you're outdoors and you're loving it. Well, tell yourself that simply taking your gear to the woods is worth more than fifty dollars and look how much you saved. Think of mind relaxing thoughts, soothing, refreshing sunshine and the thrill of working QSOs anywhere someone can hear you. Now—doesn't this bring a little excitement to your hard pressed schedule? YES IT DOES! Now get moving...!

Okay, you're on your way and it's the local park, the local picnic table, the old green grass swimming hole, and of course your backyard. Open all your knapsack stuff, lay it out and begin to hear CW in your mind. It's the Call Of The Wild. Your rig is on the table, the keyer is right next to it and your battery pack is fully charged and connected for action. You are the man and you're ready to tackle the great bands of challenge with your mighty station, location and sheer determination. If nothing else passes your mind, you want to make at least ONE QRP QSO before you go home. That makes it all worth the effort.

That's it and you're ready for exploits never dreamt before. Until the grass starts to grow, and the winds shift into warmer gear...you'll have to settle for what you have, BUT you're outside and loving it. Keep the RF flowing!



Big changes ahead for ARRL board

By Dan Romanchik, KB6NU

The results are finally in. No, I'm not talking about the national mid-term election results. As I'm writing this, some of those votes are still being counted. I'm talking about this year's ARRL board elections. ARRL members have spoken, and they have elected four new faces to the board in what was the most hotly-contested election in a long time.

Three of the five incumbents, plus an incumbent vice director running for the Northwest Division director position, were defeated by candidates calling for more transparency and for changes in the way that the ARRL operates.

Here are the results:

Central Division Director

Kermit Carlson, W9XA 1,898
Valerie Hotzfeld, NV9L 1,755

Hudson Division Director

Ria Jairam, N2RJ 1,292
Mike Lisenco, N2YBB 1,239

New England Division Director

Fred Hopengarten, K1VR 1,432
Tom Frenaye, K1KI 1,383

Northwestern Division Director

Mike Ritz, W7VO 1,589
Bonnie Altus, AB7ZQ 1,308
Horace Hamby, N7DRW 495

Roanoke Division Director

George Hippisley, W2RU 1,891
Dr. James Boehner, N2ZZ 1,365

In the only two contested vice director elections, Mark Tharp, KB7HDX defeated Daniel Stevens, KL7WM and Delvin Bunton, NS7U in the Northwest Division and in the Roanoke Division, William Morine, N2COP defeated John Humphry, W4IM. All newly elected officials will take office at noon on January 1, 2019.

I was kind of surprised here that Valerie Hotzfeld, NV9L, failed to win in the Central Division. She has certainly made many contributions to amateur radio, both in the DX/contest community and on *Ham Nation*. Apparently, though, she made some statements that she was forced to retract, and that probably hurt her campaign, and as some pointed out to me, Kermit Carlson, W9XA, was well thought of in the Central Division and in the VHF/UHF community.

Overall, though, I'm very pleased with the results. Although some of the margins of victory were small—K1VR won by only 49 votes and N2RJ won by 53 votes—I think it's pretty clear that the members want change. Now, it's up to the board, including its newest members to effect that change. As always, I'm ready to help in any way that I can.

When he's not keeping up with ARRL politics, Dan blogs about amateur radio, writes exam study guides (www.kb6nu.com/study-guides), and operates CW on the HF bands, and lately some digital modes as well. Look for him on 30m, 40m, and 80m. Please email him your thoughts about the ARRL at cwgeek@kb6nu.com.





RIVERLAND AMATEUR RADIO CLUB

Monday Nov 19, 2018 Executive Meeting

MINUTES

Call to order: 1700 hrs

Members Present : Kevin Holcomb KC9ZGD, Greg Miller K9LEC, Roger Reader KA9BKK, Dan Abts AB9TS, Carl Thurston KC9HDS, Rick Kolter KD9GVS

Approval of Minutes: October meeting minutes approved w/o comment

Treasurer's Report: November financial record available upon request

Committee Reports:

Holiday Party spending on gifts was approved, Kevin will take care of obtaining those. Party invites to be sent out Dec. 3rd, with an RSVP by Jan. 3rd. End-of-year awards were discussed, two awards to be presented at the Holiday Party on January 8th. Carl will take care of ordering the awards. Rick will take care of special invites to the recipients.

Old Business:

New Business:

VE test dates for 2019 established : Feb 9, May 4, Sept 7, Nov 9. Possible add one for Swap Fest if venue can accommodate.

Discussion on next month's Executive Board elections centered around adding one or two more names to the list, however no new nominations made at this time.

Motion to Adjourn : 1900 hrs