

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., Tues. Feb. 3, meeting room 1, lower level, Gundersen/Lutheran La Crosse. **Elmer session** 6 p.m.

RARC Web page

<http://rarc.qtb.com/>



Art Osborn, W0JDC, actively participating in National Wildlife Refuge Special Event station K9P.

Osborn honored for Lifetime Achievement

You name the event: Field Day, Skywarn Recognition, Rotary Lights or any other Riverland Amateur Radio Club function, and you can count on one thing: Art Osborn, W0JDC, will be there and will be there doing something.

Osborn is the club's 2014 recipient of the Ernie Gershon, K9ZVU, Memorial Lifetime Achievement Award. It was presented to Osborn at the club's annual holiday party Jan. 6. The award recognizes Osborn's years, not only of membership, but importantly of his active participation and service to the amateur radio community.



Skywarn training set

The La Crosse office of the National Weather Service has scheduled spotter training for La Crosse at 6:30 p.m. Wed., April 15, in Marycrest Auditorium, Mayo Clinic Health System, Franciscan Skemp, 700 West Ave. South.

The NWS recommends spotters attend sessions at least once every two years to remain current.

For other area training locations and dates go to www.crh.noaa.gov/arrl/?n=skywarn_schedule

Tech class offered

The Winona Amateur Radio Club is offering a winter Tech Class course.

Ham radio is a fun and dynamic pastime—whether your interest is in emergency communications, international contacts, kit building, satellite communications, GPS applications, social aspects of the hobby, or the many other activities ham radio offers. Morse code proficiency is no longer required for amateur radio licenses.

Classes will be 6–9 p.m. Monday evenings Feb. 9–March 16 at Winona State University. The cost is \$29.95 for the ARRL Ham Radio License Manual.

Register as soon as possible by contacting Len Litvan, KCORSX@arrl.net, or 507 643 7526.

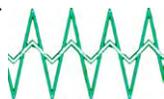
The next VE license testing will be 9 a.m. Sat. Feb. 7. Note the new location, Church of Christ, 3506 28th St. South, La Crosse. It is across 28th Street from Hintgen School.

Register at least five days in advance with Roger Reader, KA9BKK, 608 783-0723 or readers@centurytel.net.

May 2 is the next session.

President's Frequency Modulation

By Greg Miller, KA9FOZ



How to get started in Amateur Radio



You went through the classes, you studied all the required material and the big day came where you sat down with other ham ticket hopefuls to take your test. All your preparation paid off as you aced it. You are now an Amateur Radio Operator! Now the wait for the FCC to send you your call letters and you are free and clear to get on the air waves, but wait, what do you do now?

You studied, you passed the test and you have call letters but you're not sure where to go from there. We all have faced this dilemma. I was lucky to have a father who was already heavily into Ham Radio so it only took a phone call or a visit to have my questions answered. But when it came to setting up my shack and what my first radio should be I was on my own. That first one was a Hallicrafters that I picked up at a swap meet. I made a few CW contacts with it that launched me into the world of Amateur Radio.

My point: I had someone there to answer my questions. All you new Hams have that and more! You have the Amateur Radio Community at your disposal. Part of our creed is to help and foster interest and education in our hobby. Every one of us would be happy to answer questions you have whether on the phone or an eye-to-eye contact. Before club meetings hold what we call an "Elmer Session" just for this type of thing. It is held at 6 p.m. on the first Tuesday of the month at the lower level conference room 1 in Gundersen Clinic. At 7 p.m. we have a short meeting and any further questions can go on from there. Ours is a complicated hobby so we may have to find answers and learn together. *There are no worthless questions other than those that never get asked.*

If you are reading this you are receiving "The Key," in it you will find e-mail addresses and phone numbers to start with. I myself would be happy to answer questions and the ones I can't I could recommend another source. I welcome your ideas on how we can help new Hams get started. You may contact me at 608 792 7841 or ka9foz@gmail.com.

The club's doors are open to **all** Hams, club members or not, for the help they may need. All that is required is your desire and courage to step forward and ask the questions you need an answer to.

Remember: the best way to kill what could be a good idea is to first look at the negative things about it. Look at all the pluses of an idea first and you might find out the negatives go away. Just a thought to pondered.

Calendar



Sat. Jan. 31
 ♦ SSB Sprint--Phone, from Feb 1, 0000Z to Feb 1, 0400Z.

Tue. Feb. 3
 ♦ Riverland Amateur Radio Club meeting, 7 p.m., meeting room 1, lower level, Gundersen/Lutheran La Crosse. Elmer session 6 p.m.

Fri. Feb. 6
 ♦ Ten-Ten Winter Phone QSO Party--Phone, from Feb 7, 0001Z to Feb 8, 2359Z.

Sat. Feb. 7
 ♦ Minnesota QSO Party
 ♦ Vermont QSO Party
 ♦ British Columbia QSO Party
 ♦ FYBO Winter QRP Field Day
 ♦ AM QSO Party Phone,



Sun. Feb. 8
 ♦ North American Sprint, CW

Fri. Feb. 13
 ♦ School Club Roundup, 7 a.m. to 7:59 p.m. Feb 13.

Sat. Feb. 14
 ♦ Milwaukee Radio Amateurs' Club & Milwaukee Area Amateur Radio Society Mid Winter Interclub Swapfest, Brook field.

Tue. Mar. 3
 ♦ Riverland Amateur Radio Club meeting, 7 p.m., meeting room 1, lower level, Gundersen/Lutheran La Crosse. Elmer session 6 p.m.

Riverland Amateur Radio Club

P.O. Box 621
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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
 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

Ham Radio's Open House

By Ward Silver, N0AX

With a blizzard blanketing our New England hams, isn't it a bit too early to be thinking about Field Day? I can tell you that waiting until April to start the process is a good way to miss the boat!

Last year was a time of celebration on our first century but it's time to take off the party hats and look to the future. Our society is awash in wireless technology and users of it. Let's take our story to those users, awaken them to the presence of radio among them, and show them how they can participate, whether from a scientific interest, to provide a service to their fellow citizens, or simply to enjoy connecting with other peoples.

Instead of hiding our Field Day operations in some out of the way location, set up shop where the public can't possibly miss noticing our activity. Imagine your group operating from a city park or the local sports field complex, attracting a steady stream of passers-by, kids between games, families out for a picnic, a bicycle club anyone having some weekend fun.

"What is this beehive of activity with the antennas and tents? It's a ham radio open house, and look, they have free coffee and cookies!" Ten minutes later, they're on their way with some information in their heads and a handout in their pocket, or better yet, they've stored your club's web site address in their smart phone. They now know a lot more about Amateur Radio than they did at breakfast!

Field Day is structured perfectly to

act as our version of "open house."

I assume that I have lots of experienced readers with a lifetime of operating and station construction experience. Let's put that to work showing our fellow citizens what we're about. Become a ham radio ambassador for the weekend. Instead of focusing exclusively on QSO totals, make your metric for

success the number of flyers, business cards, and QR code scans you disburse to the visitors.

We all know a friendly CQ will bring out the callers and so, too, will a welcoming layout encourage visitors to take a look. Make it easy for someone to overcome their natural hesitancy and visit our world. Even better, go out to where they are,

invite them in, and ask them about their interests! Assign your group's chattier members to show them around. Create a Visitor's Logbook and record each Visitor QSO with just as much relish as working a new section. Get their contact information and follow up afterwards with more radio goodies and an invitation to a club function geared toward the non ham.

Be ready for the inevitable "Do you still do that?" question with "Not only do we still do that but look at this!" It's a pretty safe bet that most of the public is completely unaware of what radio can do.

The future of Amateur Radio depends on us. The ARRL can open doors, provide materials, suggest and share ideas, but individual hams have to close the sale, just as our Elmers did for us.



The Extra Class

Challenge

By Bill Wood, KE9XQ



I'm back to challenge you a little more. If you do not have a goal, it is sure that you will not reach it, plain and simple. Set this goal out in front of you and set a date on it. Six months from now if you did

not do so, you'll be wondering why you're not an Extra yet. Look at the testing schedules we have in our areas, pick a date you can see yourself being ready for and mark it on your calendar.

Break the penny bank, and purchase your study book. I personally like the ARRL's license manual, and if you want, get the questions and answers book too. I looked at the ARRL's and Gordon West's books, and like the ARRL better, but both do an excellent job.

If you listen around, you'll see folks that hate the study guides and definitely do not give them all the answers. One day classes are a no-no too. If there is an interest, you'll pursue the subject, and if you are not that interested, it will be history six months down the road anyway.

Read the book cover to cover, read it again with a highlighter and mark things you need to read again. Ask your study partners about such and such and try to get an understanding of what is going on. Now just read the highlighted parts, and underline what needs to be underlined, then read the underlined material and put a check mark near the sentences you still do not understand. Now read the checked sentences and mark what you need with an asterisk and then read the asterisk marked lines and circle certain words here and there. Next read the whole book again, as quickly as you can several times skimming over the material you have fairly well mastered.

When you go to take your test, you'll probably ace it!

Chewing the Fat

Who deserves the license



There have been a lot of opinions going back and forth over the ether waves about Ham Radio, what it is or isn't, what people feel should be included in the licensing procedure, and what responsibilities lay with those Hams who have been licensed for a long time. Not everyone in the Ham community are open and welcoming to new Hams. Not everyone is eager to see things change. Not everyone feels the need to make things happen.

There is an attitude that is quite prevalent that, bluntly put, sounds something like this: "when I got my Novice, I had to go to Minneapolis to take the test and then I had to wait a month to get the results," or "when I got my General, I had to read CW at 15 words a minute," or "for my Advanced Class ticket I was required to read CW at 20 words per minute."

It is laudable for those who were able to brave those requirements. None of those requirements are in use today and as a result many who were forced to

longer shackled with having to travel great distances to achieve a Technician Class rating, or any of the upper class ratings. The Morse Code requirement fell by the wayside some time ago and everyone was convinced that Ham radio was doomed as a result. Guess what, CW is more popular than ever and the total number of Hams nationally is on a steady rise.

It is true that many of the new Hams know little of the construction, repair, or tuning of classic HF rigs. It is sadly true as well that many new Hams, once they get their Technician Class license do nothing with it. In fact the number of new Hams that even buy and use an HT is small in comparison to those who are active members of the Ham community.

Some older Hams have little good to say about those Hams who went through a one day class and got their Technician license or those who, after the demise of the CW requirement

do those deeds now feel that the new Hams that didn't meet those requirements are some what lacking in their stature and ability as Hams.

There may be something to their ideas about the new Hams. Yes the new Hams are no

slipped into the General Class. Or even those who were so brazen as to pass the required test for Extra Class without the benefit of a CW requirement.

All of that is water under the bridge and we all know it. There are a lot of Hams who have managed to excel in the ranks by breezing through those super easy tests for advancement, or so it would seem. There are those among us who have had it "easy" and there are some among us who have a very hard time trying to pass even the Technician Class test. There are some Hams who have tried and retried to pass the General Class test. Are these individuals any less in stature than others who have made it past the bar of those tests? Some people have a great deal of difficulty studying, absorbing, and learning the written word, but you don't hear them complain. No, they are the ones who keep coming back time after time in pursuit of their goals. No they may not be the most knowledgeable of amateur Radio Operators, but by God once they achieve their goal of obtaining that most valued license, they will be devoted to Ham radio like no others.

You might be wondering where I'm going with this. It is simply this: is it their failure to pass the test or is it ours for not helping them along the way. When they do pass the test, will we help them to be good Hams or will we let them languish in the mire of further ignorance? Who is ultimately the blame? Is it the individual who tries and fails, or is it us, who don't help them?