

# 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.

**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.

Once again fun was had by all at this years Christmas Dinner. Although a smaller group than in years past we still enjoyed each others company, had great door prizes and had another great meal. Schmitty's continues to serve a meal fit for a Ham. Thank You to President Kevin for doing a great job of organizing the event this year.



## Who says its over? By Carl Thurston, KC9HDS

Every once in a while some thing happens that brings life back into an otherwise sleeping club. There have been some Hams who have bemoaned the lack of interest in doing projects, having special event stations, and just generally being motivated to do anything. At times a fog descends on things and makes it hard to do much of anything. A few of our members have continued to try to stir things up to create interest in planning, preparing for and doing events. This is especially difficult when so many of our members are some what less than eager to do anything that requires commitment and effort. With the start of the new year the obvious event to kick start action is Winter Field Day. It may be because of the cold and icy conditions that have prevailed for so long, that interest in Winter Field Day got off to a slow start this year. So many Hams have been dazed by world happenings that there didn't seem like there was any use in doing anything, much less spending the effort needed to do Winter Field Day. In fact, the Executive Board was ready to scrub the whole idea and move on to other things.

No planning took place and no one seemed to be eager to brave the elements to host or participate in an event like Winter Field Day. But there was a small spark that lit things up at our annual Holiday Party and a few stalwart Hams expressed a desire to do it anyway. The planning was somewhere between haphazard and non existent, but that didn't matter. The place to have it was undetermined, but that didn't matter. The probability that we wouldn't be competitive in this event either, but that didn't matter. So we had a few who were interested, but nothing firm as to where or how we would do this, but that just plain didn't matter! Then things began to gel. A place was chosen, and in spite of not having an event chairman, Hams began stepping forward to put out the call and encourage those less active to participate. Before long a theme was determined and with that and the prospect of having a vintage HF station at its core, interest began to swell, so things looked up and a great event was born.

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# Confessions of an Antenna Guru

by Bill Wood, KE9XQ

Greetings Fellow Hams

My title here might mislead you so please give me a chance to develop my story. It all started years ago with a \$300 B&W Folded Dipole. I needed this for MARS activities NNN0AEE at the time. N9NRF Wally and I learned a few things about this antenna and started accumulating the things needed to build a bunch of them and similar antennas and then sell them for less than 1/3rd the MSRP : ) Well, that never came to fruition, but the rest of the story here boggles the imagination, and shows just how smart I really aren't. : )

I put up a G5RV and had trouble with it, put up an off center fed ZEP and had trouble with it. Then decided to use tuners, and had trouble with them, had Ron W9EOA go over the tuners with a fine toothed comb and still no go. Getting the picture yet??? Well, bought a new antenna, an Alpha Delta 160, 80, 40 and put her up. I noticed something very strange, I could raise it 20 feet and change the SWR, lower it 10-20 feet and back down with the SWR. What gives??? I knew my coax OHMed out good, but something just was not right. Finally, feeling pretty stupid, I went and bought some good coax from Tom, WA9TS and set it up once more. VOILA, Eureka and so on, I found my troubles.

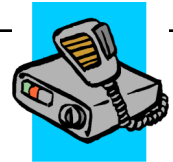
Why would a piece of coax look good and test bad? Why act good at 25 feet and terrible at 35 feet? Why work great with Near Vertical and bad with dipoles? All I can think of is center conductor getting too close to braid and shifting the length brought it closer or farther away and changed the impedance...

And now you know the rest of the story. : I need a GURU for an ELMER : )73 fer now

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As of this writing, the actual event hasn't taken place yet, but the enthusiasm leading up to it is encouraging. A number of older Hams were attracted by the idea of using vintage radios at the event, some even volunteered to bring additional home built transmitters to this event. Some of the younger members were showing signs of increased interest with the event because of the anticipation of seeing and using other wise unavailable HF rigs, as well as the educational aspect of senior Hams being there to show how they work. All this without formal planning or preparation. There are times when it is difficult to get things going because of one thing or another. A lot of the time it is because so many of our members have done so much in the past that they don't feel that anything can be gained by doing it again. Added to that, we are gaining new members with little Ham experience, so they are mostly unaware of what is possible. It is especially for the benefit of the new Hams that an event like this has merit. How else will they gain the knowledge and experience needed to become seasoned Hams? Many thought that the possibility of this event taking place this year was out of the question, that it was too late to do, that the time for it was over. The truth is, we can do it. We can make it work. We can make it a viable event. We will do it! So with that in mind I say again..... Who says its over!

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



President.....Kevin Holcomb, KC9ZGD  
 Vice-President.....Dan Abts, AB9TS  
 Secretary.....Rick Kolter, KD9GVS  
 Treasure.....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 of the Riverland Amateur Radio Club. Address any correspondence to Greg Miller at k9lec@arri.net.

Testing for new Ham's or upgrades for 2017 will be on the following dates:

- April 1
- June 3
- August 5 (Swapfest)
- September 9
- November 11



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

## February 2017

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3	4 Groundhog Day Special Event Station punxclub.com
5	6	7 Program Night 7:00 PM	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20 Trustee Meeting 5:00 PM	21	22 Daytona Speed Week Special	23	24 Event daytonacert.net	25
26	27	28				

## It might not be Spring yet, but...

By Carl Thurston, KC9HDS

I know that traditionally we do our big clean outs and clean ups in Spring, but with such a long string of inclement weather, I find it helps to pass the time by cleaning out the Shack. It has been too long since I made a serious attempt to clean it out so I've decided to bite the bullet and get at it. As it turns out, this is an especially good time of year to do this as it appears the Gremlins that are usually present have gone into hibernation, or maybe they are bothering some Hams in Florida for a change. Anyway, they haven't made their presence known to me for some time so I'm counting my blessings and in appreciation for their absence, I'm digging into the mess in my Shack.

For most of you, I'm guessing that this wouldn't be much of a job, but my Shack is more than a just a Shack, it is also a landing zone for anything that doesn't have an otherwise designated home. Imagine if you will, those of you old enough to remember, Fibber McGee's closet and multiply it by about 5.

That will put it in the ball park of what my Shack was like when I started a month ago. Oh yes, it is still a mess, but at least things no longer fall out of it when I open the door and I can actually get in there without too much trouble. Its far from where it needs to be, but I can at least get to my HF rig and do a QSO or two now and then.

This Shack wasn't always this congested, time was when it was really neat and clean, but that was such along time ago that I can't remember exactly when that was. The room in my basement that I call my Shack used to be a bedroom, but that was so long ago that I can't even imagine how it was. Since then, my oldest son, whose room it was, has moved out (he is now 42 years old so that should tell you something). In the meantime, this room has gone through a few changes over the years. It no longer can be used as a bedroom, that is for anyone of normal dimensions, it has instead become not only a radio shack but it is also a workshop, museum, and yes it is even a bear cave. I call it a bear cave because no ordinary man would ever think of it as a "man cave."



The room itself is roughly 12 X 14 feet in size with 2 windows for natural light, a suspended ceiling that is insulated for heat and sound, as are the walls, a parts closet and of course a closable lockable door. I think that subconsciously I was always planning it for a radio shack, even before I had a Ham ticket. The walls are all covered with shelves containing a substantial collection of electronic lab equipment as well as a nice collection of vintage meters, CW keys, tools, and parts. All of this came to pass fairly slowly over the years, but has gained momentum over time until there wasn't even room to stand in there. Since then, thanks to my continuing policy of selling, giving away, and trashing things, it is now almost useable.

Some who have seen it before I set to work on it would probably not believe their eyes if they looked in there now. You can actually see the floor and there are 2, count 'em, 2 chairs that can be sat upon in there now. It still isn't where I'd like it to be, but it is much better than it was. Most of the stuff that was in there has been moved to the family room, but that is another story. Most of the items that occupied the side walls of it have been rearranged into a more efficient lay out and there is another metal cabinet that needs to be assembled and placed in there. Once that is in place, I'll be able to move most of the stuff in the family room into it and thus my XYL will be greatly relieved.

This could wind up to be a win win situation: I could gain a nice comfortable useable Shack and we might even be able to use the family room for the normal family things that one might think of that a family room is normally used for. Now if I could just continue to hold those pesky Gremlins at bay. I might even be able to get on the air regularly.

# RIVERLAND AMATEUR RADIO CLUB

## Wednesday January 18, 2017 Trustee Meeting

### MINUTES

**Call to order:** 17:07

**Members Present** : Kevin KC9ZGD, Greg K9LEC, Roger KA9BKK, Dan AB9TS, Carl KC9HDS, Bill KE9XQ, Rick KD9GVS

**Approval of Minutes:** 12/20/16

**Treasurer's Report:** Greg K9LEC Treasures' report available to members upon request.

### **Committee Reports:**

Roger Reader KA9BKK updated us with 3 new licensees from Jan 14 VE testing. RCK will send out letter to each with complementary club membership when they receive call signs.

Greg will get RCK key to Post Office lock box, and also RCK will publish membership list & send out new membership cards to all members in good standing

### **Old Business:**

Greg TnT project : No progress, waiting on better weather

### **New Business:**

Kevin KC9ZGD distributed copy of current club Constitution with amendments. RCK to draft new copy and return to committee for review by next Board meeting.

Carl reports Scott Cross KB3MKD volunteered his camper for Winter Field Day Jan 28 & 29. Will check with Scott and report back at Sunday Net if possible.

Committee list was discussed, Kevin will edit where necessary

Picnic Date: Vet's or Goose Island has shelters available. Greg M. volunteered his place for Picnic site, the group agreed.

St. Patrick's Day Parade : Kevin will ask for volunteers for the March 11 date.

Field day computers that are normally used belong to Dan, AB9TS

Kevin brought up the future use of flash drives for all Executive members to have for easier access to club documents

At the suggestion of Roger Reader, RCK will draft a letter to mail out to encourage membership renewal. Roger will take care of the actual mailings, Kevin will produce address labels.

Discussion of status of "The Key" Carl KC9HDS expressed interest in taking it over, can we get the templates Bob W9LSE was using ? RCK to send him e-mail request. Dan AB9TS suggested sending some articles for "The Key" to Dave Ruscher KD9EPN since he also has volunteered to work on it. Nothing definite at this point.

#### **Program Idea list:**

Kevin asked that each Executive member choose 10-12 ideas from the entire list to pursue For future club meetings. Also choose 3-4 field trip ideas. Report back to Kevin on this.

Roger has volunteered for "History of Heathkit" for March

Kevin will do his "Scanner-Digital vs. Analog" presentation in August

Kevin will push hard for field trip to WXOW tower site for tour of facilities along with our repeater. 146.97

**Motion to Adjourn** : 18:38, Greg and Dan motioned.

Respectfully Submitted by Rick Kolter, KD9GVS