

**RIVERLAND  
AMATEUR  
RADIO CLUB**

**SPECIAL  
POINTS  
OF IN-  
TEREST:**

- Club Awards
- Winter Field Day
- K9LEC RF Interference Update
- Dan Romanceck Blog

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# THE KEY

ISSUE 2 FOR 2020

FEBRUARY 2020

## CHRISTMAS DINNER

Another Christmas Dinner capping off a year of Ham Radio fun for the club, as about 45 Hams and spouses enjoyed an hour of socializing and Christmas cheer followed by a dinner of fish, tips, mashed potato's and beans and a dish of ice cream.



Then President Dan began the presentation of this years awards. As shown in the picture below the recipi-

ents were very appreciative to be recognized for their efforts towards Amateur Radio. Next came the distribution of the gifts that Dan had picked out. I think all had fun deciding what they wanted to take.



Then there was more socializing before the evening slowly came to a close.

One thing noticed this year that always seemed to have happened but didn't was the sub-zero weather. Past years it always

seemed that it was either very cold or it was a snow storm. We all were happy that the cold and snow held off for us, especially for the ones that had to travel longer distances.

So tip your glass to a fun and successful 2020 for the club and another fun Christmas Dinner in 2021.



Receiving awards this year from left to right are: Bill Wood KE9XQ, Elmer of the Year, Rick Kolter, KD9GVS, Ham of the Year, Drew Neve, AB9NE, Ham of the Year, Greg Miller, K9LEC, Life Time Achievement Award, Shawn Hicks, KD9KGQ, New Ham of the Year.

## Presidents Upper Sideband

*“We have a wonderful board this year. I know because it is the same group we had last year.”*

We have a wonderful board this year. I know because it is the same group we had last year. They have been very generous with volunteering for tasks that need to be done so now we know who will be doing what. With the suggestions members put on their renewal forms and those made by board members, we have 22 program night ideas. I asked the board members to rank their top 10 and we are going to have those who come to the February meeting do the same so we have topics for the program meeting nights on what is most interesting to you. Then we will contact potential presenters for the top ideas and come up with a calendar. I'll be sharing that when it gets firmed up. The February program will be a presentation by David Peters KB9EWG on programming radios.

As I write this I'm also thinking about what else I need to pack for Winter Field Day coming up this Saturday. I still need to get the logging computers ready. I'm sure that it will be well attended and will be a good chance to talk with more hams and get them on the air. The weather looks good for January!

The board is in the process of looking into club shirts to wear for meetings and events where the deployment vests aren't appropriate. At the next board meeting I hope we can decide on a style and color.

The date and location for the swapfest has been determined. Mark your calendars for August 8<sup>th</sup> 8:00 am at the Onalaska American Legion. Watch for the flyer for more details. Special thanks to Carl KC9HDS for finding this great location and securing the date for us. The parking lot should work great for tailgaters and the Legion will make the food this

year.

There is a lot going on in March. The 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> is the ARRL International DX Contest. I try to get on the air at least for a few hours for this event every year. This is the best time I know to work foreign countries. They are listening specifically for stations from the US. The Eau Claire ham radio auction and Storm Spotter Training is in March. The Wisconsin QSO party is March 15. The St. Patrick's Day Parade is March 14<sup>th</sup>. This short parade is a great way to learn about what we do for this type of event. We have enough hams working it that you can have an experienced ham working with you.

We are looking into changing the club callsign to W9UP. This is SK Phil Uehling's callsign who was a long time member of this club. He graciously allowed us to use it for Field Day a number of times and we would be honored to use it again. A number of members expressed a desire to have a call shorter and easier to use than WR9ARC.

The new Yaesu DR-2X repeater has arrived. The repeater committee will be getting together soon to learn about it and start setting it up. Stay tuned for more details on the new repeater.

There are a number of other things in the planning stage. Among these are a balloon launch, MS Walk, fox or hidden transmitter hunt, Onalaska Community Days, picnic and of course Field Day June 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup>. Please try to attend a number of these events and help out where you can. That will make it enjoyable for you and everyone else.

Feel free to contact me with comments and suggestions at [AB9TS@yahoo.com](mailto:AB9TS@yahoo.com). 73 de Dan AB9TS



*“As I stated in our first meeting, ARES/RACES is ours, not mine. I may be the EC, but we train together, we work together, and we operate together.”*

## ARES/RACES...By Kevin Holcomb, KC9ZGD

As we start out with a new year, ARES/RACES is once again a part of LaCrosse County! With the new appointment of a new Emergency Coordinator for Monroe County, Kelly Becker KD9LQW, I was asked about getting LaCrosse back on board with the state. With my past experience with ARES/RACES in LaCrosse and much training, I considered it and decided to go for it.

In the beginning of November 2019, I was appointed as the new EC for LaCrosse County. With the holidays, I decided to wait until the new year before having our first meeting, net, or training. Our first meeting was held at the LaCrosse County Administration building located at the corner of 6<sup>th</sup> and State street in downtown LaCrosse. (The old First Federal bank building) I met with new members on January 14<sup>th</sup> at 6:30pm in the basement in room 100/101 for a little over an hour where we went over decisions on meeting times and nets.

The LaCrosse County ARES/RACES meetings will be meeting on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday

of every month at 6:15pm and our local net will be on Monday nights at 8:30pm on the 97 repeater. Other nets or repeaters will be added later as we get more established in our meetings, trainings, and needs. So far, for the first month, we have gained a total of 13 new members and I have cho-



sen Rick Kolter KD9GVS to be the assistant EC in case of my absence and or needs for extra help.

Speaking of help, the Monroe county ARES/RACES and LaCrosse County ARES/RACES will be working closely together in training and drills for Kelly and I have very similar desires to get ARES/RACES up and running in our area. Our counties are so close together and we all work with and know

each other that we might as well train and work on projects together.

As I stated in our first meeting, ARES/RACES is ours, not mine. I may be the EC, but we train together, we work together, and we operate together. I also stated that I want to take this slow, get our training in and do some drills, but take our time. I do not want to rush, creating fatigue and fading interest. My goal is to keep it interesting, fun, exciting, and beneficial to all that are involved. As part of starting out slow, we do not have a website yet at this time, but if any

one would have comments or questions, you can contact us at:

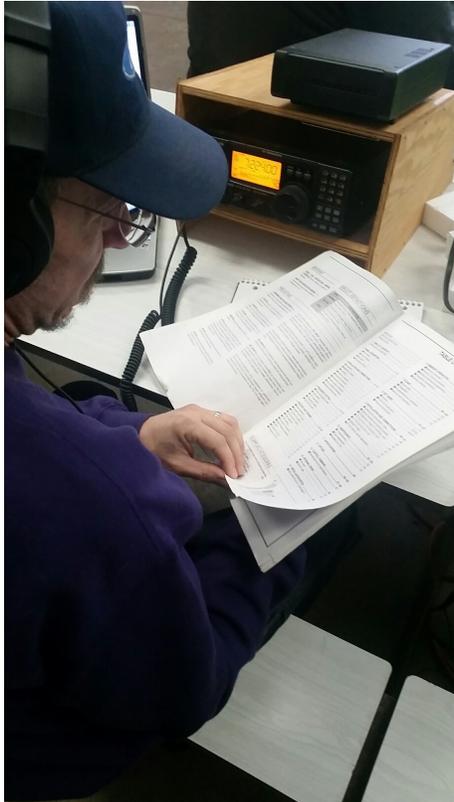
[www.lacrossecountyaresraces@gmail.com](http://www.lacrossecountyaresraces@gmail.com).

So before signing off, our next meeting will be February 11<sup>th</sup>. More training and events to come along with a lot more information. So this is, Kevin, KC9ZGD signing off and 73's.

# Winter Field Day

The Riverland Amateur Radio Club got together on Saturday January 25 for the Winter Field Day Associations Winter Field Day Event. An event similar to the June field day except it is held in the dead of winter. Cold hands and feet while stringing antennas thru the trees. Once that is all set and the generator up and running we settle down in the warmth of a shelter house for the actual radio contacts. While some are working the radios others are enjoying the food, beverages and good discussion with other hams.

This year we met at 9:00 AM and finally broke up at 6:30 PM. All help set up and tear down so it never seems like to much work. Contacts were few but the list of 23 people in attendance had a great time.



"Rick, once the contest begins is not the time to figure out how to use the transceiver".



One of the antennas used at Winter Field Day, a Wolf River Coil.



Everyone seemed to enjoy the day.

## UPCOMING EVENTS FOR FEBRUARY 2020

RARC Sunday Night 2Meter Net is held on the 146.970 repeater at 8:00 PM. Net control operators for this month are:

February 2...Carl, KC9HDS

February 9...Mark, KB9OFK

February 16...Rick, KD9GVS

February 23...Kevin, KC9ZGD

February 1...VE Testing. Contact Roger Reader, KA9BKK at 608-783-XXXX or readers@centurytel.net.

February 4...Program Night at Unitarian Universalist Fellowship Hall, 401 West Avenue LaCrosse, WI. This night will feature David Peters, KB8EWG on programming radios.

February 17...Trustee Meeting at Perkins Restaurant at 5:30 PM.

## 2020 a New Year ...by Carl Thurston, KC9HDS

With the close of 2019 we have much to look back on with a certain amount of pride. A lot has happened and the ground work for even more has been set. But that was last year, so now we must look to what might be done, what can be done, and what has to be done this year. These are heavy things to contemplate. There was a time when such thoughts might have been overwhelming for our club members, but not anymore. We have transitioned from an attitude of "It can't possibly work." to a realization that "If we work together, anything is possible!"

This year's Holiday Party was a good example of identifying what has been done and it also gave us a glimmer of what can be done, if we use our combined talents to progress. There have been many very good Holiday Party's in the past and they seem to keep getting better all of the time. Each one building on the previous one to make it a more convivial and well attended occasion. This is not to say that parties of the past were in anyway deficient, but rather that as they progressed, new ideas came to light as to how to make them better and better. Every year some at the party are heard to say

"Boy this was a great party! I don't see how it could be any better than this!" But it always is better, as new things are tried at these parties.

Oh yes, years ago we had a great Holiday Party at "Nel's City Grill," it was a good venue, but rather expensive and some of our members, especially those on fixed incomes, enjoyed it but it was a bit of a financial pinch for them. A committee was formed to find a place that



was more suited to all of our member's needs. So to have a more viable event that everyone could enjoy, a committee was formed to find the best Place for our Holiday Party. After much investigation the committee settled on Schmidty's Restaurant as the best place for our Holiday Party. It has been held there every year since. The facilities were ample, the food was good and it was served family style enabling everyone to

eat as much as they liked, and the cost was reasonable.

Having solved the location issue and menu, the only things left to consider were the way that the event was run and how awards and prizes were to be handled. Dan Abts (AB9TS), our current President had a plan to implement this. There wasn't much to change about the Annual Awards, just the number decided upon and who was to receive them. Various means were tried

**Van Elston, WA9FIO, receiving the 1987 Ham of the Year**

and enjoyed over the years to both entertain and to distribute the awards and the prizes. Having built on previous Holiday Parties, Dan's

plan was to minimize the preparation of the prizes by not wrapping them up. He distributed them by having everyone draw numbers, and going up in turn to select what they wanted. The Awards were presented and the prize given out to everyone's satisfaction. So, 2020 was started off on a good note with a Holiday Party with Awards and prizes that everyone like and a good time was had by all.

73 Happy New Year!

**"Boy this was a great party! I don't see how it could be any better than this!"**

Everything should be made as simple as possible, but not simpler...By Dan Romanchik, KB6NU

"Everything should be made as simple as possible, but not simpler" is a quote attributed to Albert Einstein (<https://quotationcelebration.wordpress.com/2017/01/07/everything-should-be-made-as-simple-as-possible-but-not-simpler-albert-einstein/comment-page-1/>). Here's one way to apply this principle in amateur radio, specifically to code practice oscillators.

**A week ago, my friend, Paul emailed me:**

"I am planning on teaching a two-hour introduction to Morse code to 14 girls ages 8 to 9 *[[Paul's granddaughter is a Girl Scout.]]*. I plan on having the girls build a code practice device. I need your help in selecting a low cost buzzer and battery holder. Please take a look around and see what you can find. I would like to limit the power to one or two AA batteries."

**I replied that I'd be happy to help him with the demonstration, and offered the following advice:**

"A while back, I built the QRPGuys' K7QO Code Practice Oscillator (<https://qrpguys.com/k7qo-code-practice-oscillator>). It uses a CR2032 coin battery.

"Unfortunately, they don't sell it anymore, but the assembly manual is still online ([https://qrpguys.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/cpo\\_assy\\_012616.pdf](https://qrpguys.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/cpo_assy_012616.pdf)). The assembly manual doesn't call out specific parts, but here are some Amazon SKUs:

B00J4BK0NS, Black 3V Electromagnetic Type Piezo Buzzer, 20 pcs/\$6.58  
 B06XF3K4NP, Coin Cell Button Battery Holder, 30 pcs/\$9  
 B008SNZUYC, 3 Pin PCB Mount Female 3.5mm Stereo Jack, 10 pcs/\$5.40  
 B071RMD6FD, 1/8" 3.5mm Stereo Male Connector, 10 pcs/\$7

"Batteries are available at the dollar store for about 30 cents each. So, you could do the whole thing for less than \$5 for sure, even with a printed circuit board, which I would suggest that we do. Heck, if you ask nicely, the QRPGuys might even give us the artwork, or even better, have some boards still in stock. Even if they have neither, you should be able to get the boards in plenty of time."

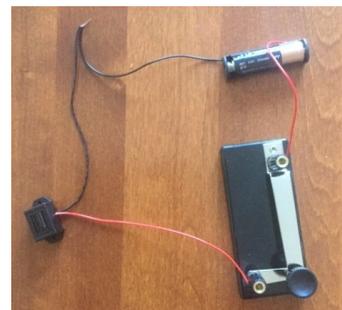
**Later that day, Paul replied:**

**Thanks, Dan, for the information and making yourself available to help. I am just going to use a buzzer, key, and battery. The buzzer has a frequency of 400 Hz.**

<https://www.xump.com/science/Buzzer-Leads15V.cfm>  
<https://www.xump.com/science/ContactKeySwitch.cfm>  
<https://www.xump.com/science/Single-AA-Battery-Holder.cfm>

**And this morning, he sent me this photo, noting, "FYI. Also sounds great."**

**I think that this is as good an example of "Everything should be made as simple as possible, but not simpler" as there can be. I've volunteered to help Paul with his class. That will be fun, too.**



Dan Romanchik, KB6NU, is the author of the KB6NU amateur radio blog (KB6NU.Com), the "No Nonsense" amateur radio license study guides (KB6NU.Com/study-guides/), and often appears on the ICQPodcast (icqpodcast.com). When he's not trying to keep things as simple as possible, but not simpler, he likes to build stuff and operate CW on the HF bands.

## BILL'S CORNER

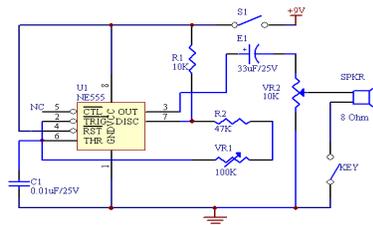
Today we should look at CPOs or code practice oscillators. If you've watched some of the old movies you saw many times where code entered the scene. Most of you know dididit dada-dah dididit without even thinking of it. This may be the limit, but you know those, and the importance of them. Morse can become a tool that can save your or someone's life. Read many of the old QST and you will see story after story where CW came to the rescue. Quite often CW will make the trip where SSB and FM fail miserably. Even if you do not plan on using this mode of communication, it would behoove you to learn it well, as you could save some sailor's life.

CPOs are basically an oscillator and you can make oscillations many different ways. Hold your mike up to the speaker and key it and you have howling, or oscillations. You control the pitch with the nearness of the mike. Reminds me of the Theremin

([https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fdU6W\\_\\_EU\\_c](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fdU6W__EU_c))(let me know if you got that one. wlw) with hands closer or further away from the two antennas. But if you put the oscillator's components and values in proper sequence and all, you can make a CPO that will not change pitch or volume unless you want them changed.

I was told today's KEY might have a Key or oscillator article in it, so came up with this article to hopefully compliment the other article. Here are a couple links you might find worth your time.

<https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=code+practice+oscillator+diy&view=detail&mid=C88CB5CF67E65>



D12DDFDC88CB5CF67E65D12DD  
FD&FORM=VIRE

<http://www.cranburyscouts.org/ElecOsc.htm>

Took this Jpeg off the next link:

<https://www.electronics-project-design.com/CodePracticeOscillator.html>

OK, enough web surfing for now, but as they say "Google is your friend" It is easy to copy one of these circuits, and most junk boxes have your components. If you don't have a good junk box, 6 or 7 dollars will have the post man bring one to your door. Let's all build one and play QLF at the meetings, or catch one another on the air one of these days.

73 Everyone

Bill KE9XQ

DiDiDit DaDiDah

## One, Two, Three...FAIL...By Greg Miller K9LEC

Well here we go again, imagine my surprise and excitement when I see a flatbed semi coming down my road with a load of planking for ground cover so the power company can work on the lines. When I stopped and talked to them the first thing said was "Are you the guy with the radio interference" to which I said yes I am. They tell me the pole in question was going to be gone over top to bottom in the upcoming week and that should solve the issue.

Monday morning comes and they are here very early with equipment to get to the top of the pole as you can see in the picture at the right. This shot shows the grounding straps being attached. While this was going on I was at my radio with a clear 20m signal.

They continued the work thru out the morning and completed it about noon. They tell me they found some loose nuts and cotter pins. So I wait for the 345 KV line to be turned back on. That hap-

pened about 12:30.

Turning on my radio to 20m I hear the worst static interference I have ever heard. I appreciate the work they did but we are no closer than we were before. We now start year #2 with out being on the air.



## Rotary Lights Wrap Up

Club president, Dan AB9TS and I had the honor on Saturday, January 25, 2020 of representing Riverland Amateur Radio Club at the Rotary Lights 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Banquet. The event was hosted at the La Crosse Center in the North Hall. We were treated to good food, live music and fellowship with other volunteer organizations.

The evening highlighted the efforts of approximately 3,200 volunteers that are needed to make this community event happen. Each year this event brings in nearly 160,000 visitors to see the 3 million lights on display at Riverside Park. This requires a lot of volunteer hours to get the park set up, keep running throughout the season and for teardown on New Year's Day.

This is an extremely important tourism event for La Crosse, as it generates 3 million dollars in tourism revenue from just the day trip visitors to La Crosse. It doesn't include the visitors who come for Rotary Lights and stay overnight in our hotel accommodations.

However, what makes this event truly special is that it brings out the good in our fellow man. Over the past 25 years, 4 million food items have been collected to stock food pantries in La Crosse and surrounding communities. A lot of our local food pantries couldn't be sustained throughout the year if it wasn't for the food brought by this event. Rotary Lights' primary goal has always been to use the attraction to draw in monetary and food donations to feed the less fortunate.

I am proud of our club's involvement in this community event. We volunteer to do the less than glamorous work to help keep this great event up and going every year. Our club Christmas tree adds flavor to the holiday spirit on display by all the decorated club

trees in the park. We are willing to march in the Rotary Lights Parade on a cold evening in order to be actively involved in a holiday celebration that brings joy to the young and young at heart.

Finally, I am looking forward to Rotary Lights 2020 and would encourage an even bigger group participation in the Rotary Lights Parade. I hope new and old members will join us to show off our pride in our club and our community as a whole.

Shawn KD9KGQ



Shawn Hicks, KD9KGQ, posing with the club's Christmas Tree. Note the handi-talkie ornaments.

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**Shawn Hicks, KD9KGQ, is the committee chairman of the Riverland Amateur Radio Club for the Rotary Lights .**

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# RIVERLAND AMATEUR RADIO CLUB

## Monday, January 20th, 2020 Board Meeting

### MINUTES

**Call to order:** 5:41 PM, 2341 UTC

**Members Present** : Ken Weigel W9GM, David Peters KB9EWG, Greg Miller K9LEC, Dan Abts AB9TS, Shawn Hicks KD9KGQ, Carl Thurston KC9HDS, Ron Severson KD9OHQ, Bill Wood KE9XQ, Drew Neve AB9NE, Roger Reader KA9BKK, Rick Kolter KD9GVS

**Approval of Minutes:** Dec. 16, 2019 minutes approved as written

**Treasurer's Report:** Available upon request from Drew, AB9NE  
Noted that the annual audit cover sheet needs to be signed and returned, otherwise no issues with the audit itself.

### Officer's Report:

### Committee Reports:

Repeater committee/control – The new Yaesu DR-2X has arrived, committee will meet at Dan's house on Feb 1<sup>st</sup> to look over the new unit and decide next steps for installation.

Onalaska Community Days and Club picnic June 20th – we have been invited to attend, Dan will respond with our confirmation. Will hold the picnic on same day, worked out well last year.

St. Pats Parade – March 14<sup>th</sup>, MS Walk event May 30<sup>th</sup>?, likely a typo on that date.

### Old Business:

ARES/RACES – La Crosse County net Mondays 8:30pm 146.97, Monroe County net Mondays at 8:00 pm on 146.805 repeater, next meeting 2/11 6:15 County Admin building

Rotary Lights – Dinner 1/25 Shawn and Dan will attend

Club Call sign expires 4-4-20 – David EWG motioned, Rick GVS seconded that we will pursue acquiring SK Phil Uehling's call W9UP for our Club call. Roger will proceed with this process.

Newsletter articles – Several articles have been sent for inclusion in next letter, a couple more in the works.

Back-up for Art to play Newsline on Sunday Net – no progress

Balloon Launch – No progress, waiting on QRP labs

Fox Hunt – antennas and offset antenna attenuators – no progress (GVS has started his attenuator assembly)

January Holiday party – "Awesome" was the word to describe. Leftover food prizes to be brought to Winter field day or June field day.

Winter Field Day – 1-25-20 – Greg will bring Icom and Kenwood radios and generator from the trailer.

Calendar – Int. DX contest 3/7 & 8, Onalaska Community Days 6/20

Swapfest – 8/8 Rick will register on ARRL site, Greg will have flyers made up for distribution.

ARRL Affiliation – Rick will renew registration by Feb 11<sup>th</sup> along with Special Service club renewal if required.

Greg will renew Federal and State non-profit paperwork for the club.

### New Business :

Memorial for Phil Uehling at next meeting, several members knew him well

Pick top 10 program suggestions for 2020 – will distribute list at next meeting for members' input.

**Motion to Adjourn:** 7:17 pm, 0117 UTC

## CLUB INFORMATION



### Riverland Amateur Radio Club

PO Box 621

Onalaska, WI 54650

The Key is published monthly and e-mailed to members and friends of the Riverland Amateur Radio Club by the 28th of each month.

The newsletter focuses on news, announcements and activities of the Riverland Amateur Radio Club. It may also consist of news and information of interest to the Amateur Radio community as a whole. Guest editorials and articles related to Amateur Radio are welcome.

Address any correspondence or anything that should be included in the newsletter to: Greg Miller at KA9FOZ@gmail.com.

The Riverland Amateur Radio Club maintains a website at [rarc.qth.com](http://rarc.qth.com). More information about the club can be found there as well as past copies of The Key.

RARC also maintains a Facebook page where members add information and share their Amateur Radio adventures. Please friend us at Riverland Amateur Radio Club—RARC.

RARC maintains a repeater that is located on the WXOW television tower above LaCrescent, MN. 146.970 pl 131.8.

RARC holds a weekly 2meter net on Sundays at 8:00 PM on the 146.970 repeater.

Trustee Meeting is held the 3rd Monday of the month at Perkins Restaurant, 9428 State Road 16, Onalaska, WI 54650 at 5:30 PM, all club members are welcome.

Program evening is held the 1st Tuesday of the month at 7:00 PM, elmer session at 6:30 PM at 401 West Avenue in LaCrosse.

Below are listed your RARC 2019 Board of Trustees and contact information.

President.....Dan Abts, AB9TS Email...ab9ts@yahoo.com

Vice-President.....David Peters, KB9EWG Email...kb9ewg@gmail.com

Secretary.....Rick Kolter, KD9GVS Email...rckolter@gmail.com

Treasurer.....Drew Neve, AB9NE Email...ab9ne@yahoo.com

Trustee.....Carl Thurston, KC9HDS Email...kc9hds@gmail.com

Trustee.....Bill Wood, KE9XQ Email...ke9xq@charter.net

Repeater Trustee...Shawn Hicks, KD9KGQ Email...eistim68@gmail.com

Newsletter Editor.....Greg Miller, K9LEC Email...ka9foz@gmail.com