

# 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**

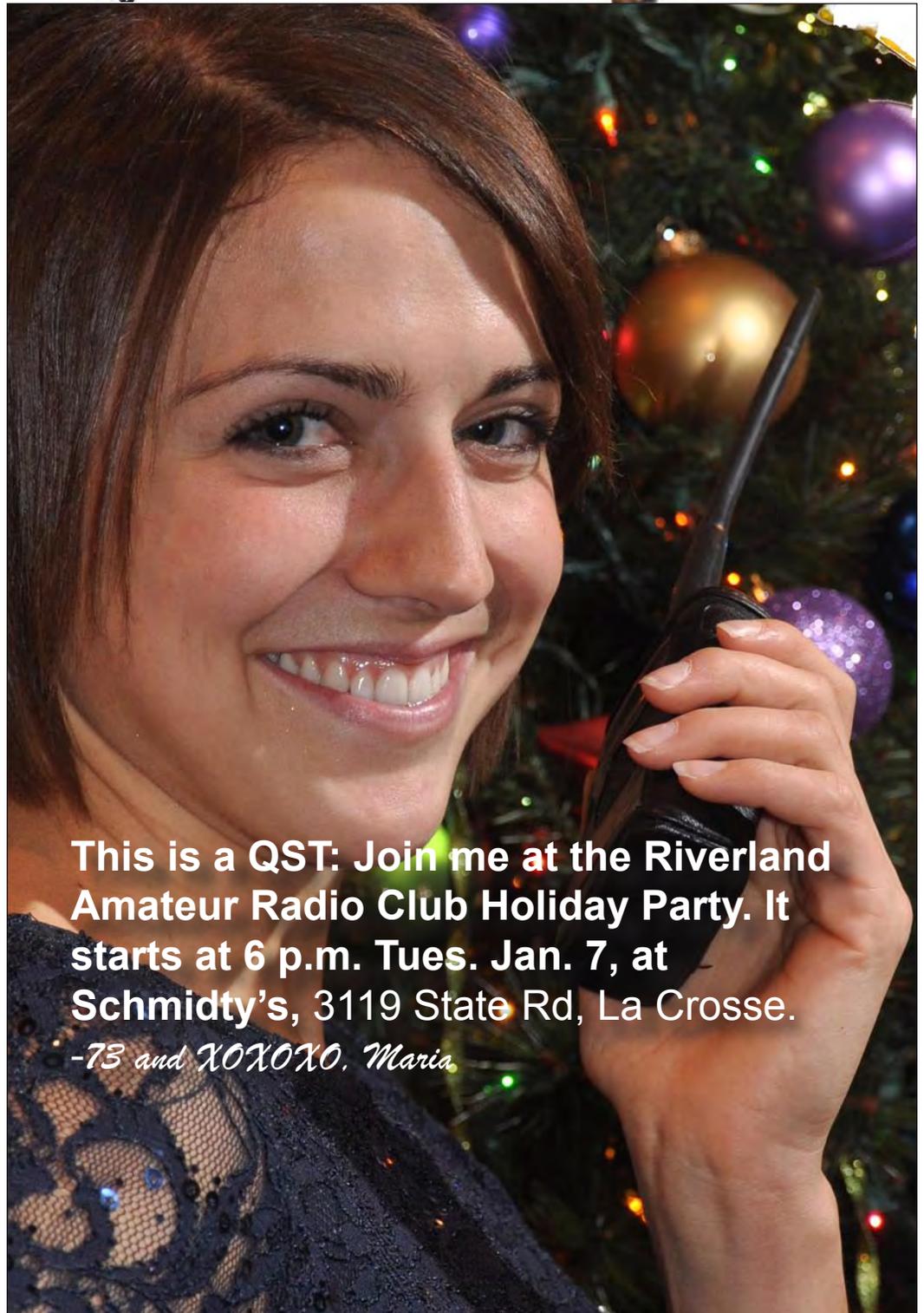
8 p.m. Sundays on the  
146.970 repeater.

**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/>



**This is a QST: Join me at the Riverland Amateur Radio Club Holiday Party. It starts at 6 p.m. Tues. Jan. 7, at Schmidy's, 3119 State Rd, La Crosse.**

*-73 and XOXOXO, Maria*

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## President's Frequency Modulation

By Greg Miller, KA9FOZ



A look back and a look forward.

Another year has come to a close and it is a good time to look back at what we've accomplished in the world of amateur radio. And it is a good time to look ahead and determine what we want to accomplish in the year ahead. Before I make that journey into the past I want to thank all the club members for making the Riverland ARC what it is. All members contribute in their own special way and it takes all to make a successful club.

The year started with our annual Christmas Party at Schmidy's Restaurant. All seemed to have a good time. Then it was on to the Winter Field Day held at my QTH, a small group but an enjoyable social afternoon. Then a long dry spell until we started helping out on the walks, runs, and bike rides in the area. We went from Field Day in June to the July picnic that we had instead of the normal meeting. Then the August Swap Fest which was a huge success. October saw us back at the Trempealeau Wildlife Refuge for the special event then it was on to the Rotary Lights Parade and Lights display. All this and holding our regular meetings as well as the Sunday Night Net every week.

This club has a lot going! Anyone looking for an active club would be the RARC. All you have to do is step forward and there will be something to do.

The year ahead looks just as busy if not more. As well as all of the above there may be a couple of other events. To start, we begin the year with the annual Holiday Party Jan. 6 again at Schmidy's. Gift giving will have a new twist to it as well as something new that I call The Presidents Surprise. Might even be a few awards handed out. Should be another fun time. Winter Field Day is just around the corner and plans are being talked about now. Again walks, bike rides and marathons thrown in. June's Field Day and picnics and Swap Fest are all on the calendar. We are always looking for ideas for the programs at the club meetings so let us know of your ideas. Could even be an HF net set up soon.

One of my personal goals this year as President is to get to know more of the members of our club so don't be surprised if you get a call from me.

I welcome any ideas members or even none members may have. My e mail for ideas is [ka9foz@gmail.com](mailto:ka9foz@gmail.com).

Remember the best way to kill what could be a good idea is to first look at the negative things about it. Try looking at all the plus' of an idea first and you might find out the negatives go away. I make this comment because all too often I hear negative comments before an idea has a chance to be completely explained and the benefits can be realized. Just a thought to be pondered.

## Local VHF on the air event

The Fifth Annual La Crosse Area 2 Meter Simplex FM QSO Party is set for 1900Z 1900Z, Sat Sun, Jan. 24 25.

It is a local event created to favor HT users and home brew antenna makers and to encourage the local ham community to get on the air for a 24 hour period. Operators throughout the area are encouraged to keep a log of their contacts in this contest and submit it to perhaps win one of the four "prestigious" La Crosse QSO Party Award Certificates. (Prize donors welcome).

The event is open to all licensed amateurs and is kid/family friendly. Properly controlled non hams are more than welcome and can also turn in a log. Newer operators get a chance to work several others gaining confidence in their own station and operating technique. Let's just see how many of the several hundred local area (50 mile radius) hams can muster for at least one call to another local ham if for no other reason than to say "hello" and/or to have fun.

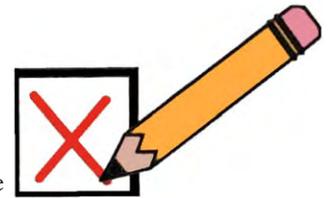
For extended rules and information go to <http://wv9e.net/fmqso.htm>



## VE test dates set

The club will offer license testing at 9 a.m. Saturdays at the Church of Christ, 3506 28th St. South, La Crosse. Note the new location. It is across 28th Street from Hintgen School. Dates are Feb. 7, May 2, Sept. 12 and Nov. 14.

Register at least five days in advance with Roger Reader, KA9BKK, 608 783 0723 or [readers@centurytel.net](mailto:readers@centurytel.net).



### 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  
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Address correspondence regarding the club to Tom O'Brien, WB9BJQ, [wb9bjq@charter.net](mailto: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](mailto:KC9IWE@arrl.net)



Some of Skywarn Recognition's contacts Dec. 6 were made by John Wetenkamp, KB9UMX (L) and Todd Shea, KB9YXS, both NWS meteorologists. For details see "Skywarn Recognition," Page 4.

## Tips for public service communicators

Here is a useful set of tips garnered from ARES/RACES that are useful in Ham Radio operating events as well:

### **You are your own safety officer**

The very first thing on your mind should be, is it safe? Am I going to irradiate anyone with RF? Could my battery spill acid? Can it fall on anyone's foot? Have I created an electrical hazard? Could anyone trip over my feedline or get poked in the eye by my antenna? The safety of your station is your responsibility. Make sure that it won't harm you or others.

### **Are you following procedure?**

Operating procedures are developed from examining what went wrong before. Familiarize yourself with the procedures and practice them in exercises. Arriving at a disaster scene and winging it will only cause problems.

### **Check transceiver for overheating**

Digital modes are great for sending forms, long lists, images and so forth. They also use a lot more duty cycles of your transceiver than ordinary voice communications. Check to make sure that your rig is not overheating.

### **Have fuses handy**

Make a list of the fuses you might need, then put together a small fuse kit.

### **You are ready to participate**

Caution is good, but don't let it prevent you from participating and volunteering. Everyone makes mistakes and everyone survives them. Most hams will be sympathetic and supportive of your efforts.

### **Don't avoid the exercises**

It's a mistake to ignore an exercise because you think you are already familiar with what it is about. There are always surprises, new elements, and things that you've forgotten.

### **Keep learning**

Everything is dynamic, including emergency communications. Never sit back and feel that you've learned everything you'll need to know.

### **Be able to power your radio**

Power connections are not generic. ARES groups around the country use Anderson Powerpoles as the standard power connector.

### **Mark your equipment**

Mark every piece of your equipment with at least your name and call sign. You'll want property you left behind to find its way back to you.

### **Have a set of headphones**

A headset should be a vital part your equipment. You can't communicate if you can't hear.

## Take the Extra Class challenge

By Bill Wood, KE9XQ

I'd like to make a challenge to you today, namely that of your Extra Ticket. It is a goal to achieve, a hill to climb, a challenge that you do not want to back down on. I double dog dare ya. Bet you haven't heard that one in a long time.

Why do people climb mountains in the first place? Because it was there; right? Well, depending on your tastes, ambition or goading let's take this little challenge and run with it.

A few years ago a few hams were visiting and one made this exact challenge, another agreed and then several more took on that goal. We met every Wednesday and asked questions, studied and played with the 20 WPM code and then went out and took our tests. Several passed right away, I got the written exam right away, but took I think it was four times to pass the 20 wpm test. I'm a slow learner. Anyway, I know some have wanted this for years, but never picked up the ball and ran with it, some will be Techs the rest of their lives, and if that is your goal, then enjoy what you have, but if you want the best, then it takes a little work and dedication. Thanks to Ernie and Art, I excepted that challenge. Take a friend aside and challenge him or her to achieve this and push them on to the goal. Don't be a procrastinator, I can prove from personal history the pay is not that good.

### **Slow-charge your batteries**

We've heard the term "fast and easy" so often that we've come to believe that's the best way to do things. It's not necessarily true, and it's certainly not true when it comes to charging your batteries. Fast chargers heat up your batteries and considerably shorten their life spans. Ultimately, it is cheaper and more efficient to have several batteries on hand and rotate them through a slow charger.

# Amateur Radio and computers

By Bill Wood, KE9XQ

Have you ever thought that the marriage of computers and radios 'was just wrong'? I mean, how is your computer racking up points having to do with anything like amateur radio? Well, today I would like to try to present a few ideas to show some of the relationships.

I'll save the best idea for last. If you were to take a French Class, how would you learn French? First off your teacher would explain the similarities and the differences in the alphabets, then move on to cognates and build upon the already known to the unknown. Very few of us would ever totally immerse ourselves and lose the English and only use French to communicate. Even though that's probably how you learned English. What does French have to do with computers or radios?

Fifty, 80 years ago no one would have even thought of such a question as that

last one but a few years back, amateurs started putting satellites into orbit and telecommunications, some of them encrypted came on the scene, and I'm sure most of you have played with packet a few years ago too. Can you see how technology has increased beyond the Armstrong circuit and a dipole up 30 feet? In order to build something great you need to know the first principles, the differences come to be understood by the known. Amateurs added to their Morse one thing upon the other and today you see some of those results: Spark, CW, AM, SSB/DSB. FM... wspr. As the song goes "and the beat goes on." It's going to be interesting to see what comes down the pike in the next 20 30 years. Imagine QRSS or JT65 without computers.

Now the best part: It is a known fact that one of the reasons amateurs build

satellites and computers and many, many other things just check out the Make magazine and Arduino subjects) is the idea that FCC has this hobby/service of ours is to: Catch this now: build and increase 'technology'. Some people almost dedicate their lives to CW. Ever heard the phrase 'Spark Forever'? Some people dedicate their lives to emergency preparedness, others to puttzin, but there is room for all in this subject called amateur radio, and there will be plenty more advances in technology if amateurs keep up the good work that has been done over the last 100+ years.



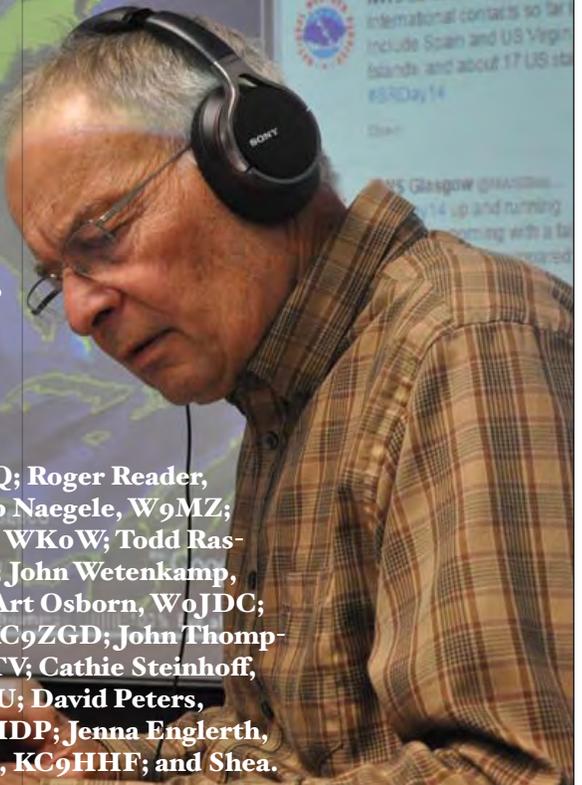
## Skywarn Recognition Day: contacts not clouds

Skywarn Recognition Day, Dec. 6, had nice weather, a good turn out and many contacts at the La Crosse office of the National Weather Service. "I thought it was another big success thanks to your efforts and attendance," said Todd Shea, KB9YXS, Warning Coordination Meteorologist. "I hope you realize how much we appreciate your help through out the year, and for all the years our office has been lucky enough to partner with your groups," added Shea.

This year 31 Hams made 292 contacts that hit 42 states, 37 other NWS offices, six Canadian Provinces as well as Hams in Lithuania, Slovenia, Sweden, Spain, US Virgin Islands, and Tasmania (Australia!). Most of the operating was done on 2, 15, 17, 20, 40, and 80 meters.

Members of the Riverland Amateur Radio club and the Mississippi River Amateur Radio Association helped host.

Those who assisted or attended included: Tom O'Brien, WB9BJQ; Roger Reader, KA9BKK; Craig Goldbeck, N9ETD; Bob Seaquist, KC9IWE; Bob Naegele, W9MZ; Chris Kanable, KC9CMD; Bill Kleinschmidt, N9FDE; Dan Goltz, WK0W; Todd Rastall, KC9NOI; Carl Thurston, KC9HDS; Dan McKenzie, W9FCC; John Wetenkamp, KB9UMX; Michael Kaufman, WB9SLI; Keith Butler, KC9IWL; Art Osborn, W0JDC; William Wood, KE9XQ; Lee Mushel, K9WRU; Kevin Holcomb, KC9ZGD; John Thompson, KB9TPG; Steven Thompson, KC9TBE; Steve Wiebke, W0STV; Cathie Steinhoff, KC9ZEZ; Matt Cummings, KDoYSY; Lance Tagliapietra, KBoYJU; David Peters, KB9EWG; Joshua Roskos, KC9WWH; Larry Worthington, KC9HDP; Jenna Englerth, KC9CGS; Todd Shea, KB9YXS; Charles Lathrop; Linda Kaufman, KC9HHF; and Shea.



## Wish list

By Carl Thurston, KC9HDS

It seems that nearly everyone has a wish list this time of year. Some are made known to others who may see that some of those wishes are fulfilled, some are very personal and secret as it might be a bit embarrassing to divulge their contents, some become part of a "Secret Santa" event; known to those within that event, and some are just plain wishful thinking on one's part, never to be seriously pursued.

The origin of wish lists are vague and mysterious. Most likely the adult version of the wish list is an out growth of childhood letters to Santa expressing the wants and desires of the children who wrote them. Those letters are usually simple, direct, and quaint. As we grow older, our wish lists tend to be more sophisticated; they are often comprised of many items of an elaborate and often more expensive nature. Wish lists are not limited to one particular season, but one would suspect that the majority of them are to be found during the run up to the Christmas Season. As a result, with luck, at least some of the items on a wish list will find their way to the author of it at that time.

Hams are said by some to be much like children in their desires to attain various goals and to amass the equipment they feel that they need to pursue their hobby. This is only human and for many, it is both an innocent and useful side to Amateur Radio. Most of the items that make up the average shack are fairly

expensive, at least when new; therefore it is rather prohibitive for enthusiasts to equip their shack all at once. Since in real time and real budgets, it is necessary to carefully plan out the lay out of the shack, it goes without saying that a wish list of some sort is a necessity. Such lists can be fun as well as practical; for those who do not have the wear with all to fulfill the dreams on a wish list, it can be fulfillment in itself by the mere compiling of such a list. Who wouldn't like to dream about getting a 100 foot antenna tower, a 1,500 watt self tuning linear amplifier, or a fully digital all band HF transceiver? Whether in reality these would be practical things for the average Ham or not isn't the issue. Who wouldn't want to have a world class HF station? Who would be able to afford such a set up? Anyone would be glad to at least dream of such a rig. A wish list makes such dreaming possible, even if the reality of it is way beyond the reach most Hams.

With this in mind, who wouldn't want to build a wish list of their very own? There is little or no harm in it. The results of building such a list can a possible benefit to the individual's well being in many ways, even if it never progresses beyond the wishful thinking stage. It is so ethereal that not even Gremlins can interfere with its successful completion. Think about that. A project that you can work on that is 100 percent Gremlin free! No matter how infested

your shack may be with a herd of nasty Gremlins, they have no power over your wish list!

So the up side of it all is that no matter what else might go wrong in the real world of Amateur Radio, there is one place where even the most harried hapless Ham can find a peaceful place where all will be perfect and nothing will fail. Even if this is only in one's mind, it will make a quiet, calm place to retire to, even if lightning has blown up your station, even if you forgot to renew your FCC license, even if your XYL has thrown your HF rig out into the alley, or something even worse should happen; you have your wish list to fall back on. It may even enable you to correct some of afore mentioned catastrophes, by using it as a shopping list instead of just a wish list.

A shopping list is a totally different animal. Time and space do not allow further delving into the pros and cons of a good shopping list. Perhaps at another time, in another place, shopping lists will be explored. We could even put that topic on our wish list.



## Calendar

### Tue. Jan. 6

♦ Riverland Amateur Radio Club Holiday Party, 6 p.m., Schmidy's, 3119 State Rd, La Crosse, WI 54601.

### Sat. Jan. 10

♦ West Allis Radio Amateur Club Midwinter Swapfest, 8 a.m. - 1 p.m., Waukesha County Expo Arena, Waukesha..  
♦ North American QSO Party, CW

### Sun. Jan. 11

♦ Wisconsin Antique Radio Club, 8 - 11 a.m., The Terminal, 5917 S. Howell Ave., Milwaukee.

### Sat. Jan 17

♦ North American QSO Party, SSB

### Sat. Jan. 24

♦ SPAR Winter Field Day. Details TBA  
♦ La Crosse Area 2 Meter Simplex FM QSO Party, 1900Z - 1900Z, Sat Sun, Jan. 24 - 25.

### Sat. Feb 7

♦ Minnesota QSO Party



# Riverland Amateur Radio Club Membership

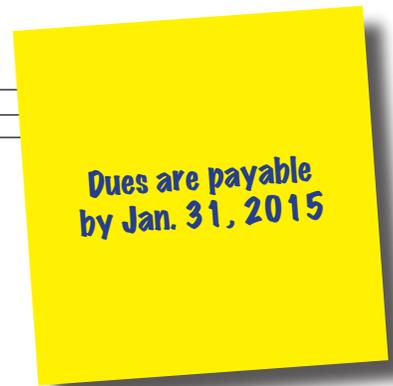
First Name \_\_\_\_\_ Last Name \_\_\_\_\_ Call \_\_\_\_\_  
Street \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Cell \_\_\_\_\_  
Email \_\_\_\_\_

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.

