

T H E K E Y

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., first Tuesday,
Gundersen/Lutheran La
Crosse. **Elmer session** 6
p.m.

RARC Web page
<http://rarc.qth.com/>



Tom Hawko, KC9RXI, operates CW by straight key at the club's Field Day.

Field Day '15 'nuther success for club members

This year's was a very good Field Day event. Everything came together very well. The attendance was high, the weather was good and the night's rain didn't affect our success. The bands remained usable and everyone who operated had some success.

This was a sort of a swan song for the site on A. Johnson Road, as Greg Miller, KA9FOZ, will be unable to host Field Day next year due to conflicts.

With that in mind, this particular Field Day was especially noteworthy. More than 30 operators and visitors were present during the weekend, including crews from both of local TV stations. Two very nice news items on those TV stations resulted.

The event gets better and better annually and this year was no exception.

Usually we operate in the 2A or 3A Class but this year, due to the strong interest by some of our members, event chair Dan Abts, AB9TS, decided to run as 5A. This worked out extremely well in spite of obstacles encountered on the bands, with equipment, weather, and fatigue.

There was some regeneration too. One person showed up for VE testing at the Field Day site only to become a Technician. Several younger Hams were able to get lots of on-the-air time, generating more interest about Amateur Radio.

Many of the younger Hams present were able to get their first real taste

of HF operation, which resulted in a bloom of QSOs being logged over the weekend. "I think we had more than 150 logged contacts," said Abts. Their eager zeal allowed many of the older, more seasoned Hams to kick back and watch them go.

The main attraction for this event for some was the bill of fair which included several delicious hot dishes, the traditional steaks, munchies, and ice cold beverages to suit the tastes of everyone present.

The event was another success despite many usual operators not able to attend. They were missed, but not forgotten. It is hoped that they will be back with us at future Field Days.



Riverland Amateur Radio Club

Door Prizes

Swap Fest

8 a.m. – 1 p.m. Saturday, August 8
Omni Center, 255 Riders Club Rd.
Onalaska, Wis 54650

Reserve your tables and
your tickets
RARC
Box 621
Onalaska, WI 54650

Talk In: 146.97 PL 131.8
Admission: \$5 Tables: \$10

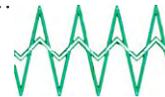


- ✓ Vendors
- ✓ Flea Market
- ✓ Buy-Sell-Trade
- ✓ Tailgating
- ✓ Refreshments
- ✓ VE session 9 a.m.
- ✓ Handicap access
- ✓ ARRL award card
- checks: DXCC, VUCC,
WAC, WAs, 160M

Refer questions to Greg Miller, KA9FOZ, ka9foz@gmail.com 608 792-7841

President's Frequency Modulation

By Greg Miller, KA9FOZ



Hands-on radio is an individual hobby. When I turn on the radio I am alone in my shack and no one around except the other operator at the other end of the radio waves. I have often thought that we should have a radio operating at our club meetings, but then maybe that is not a good idea as probably no one would use it because other people are around. Think about that, when you operate are you off on your own or in front of other people? I bet alone. So I ask the question "How comfortable are you operating in public"? That brings up Field Day. We work to set up radios and antennas and open the doors for anyone to operate but yet it seems not a lot of operating takes place. Is it because of "Mic Shyness"? I have some of that and I am sure most of us do. I am not sure how to overcome that other than getting on the radio as often as you can.

Field Day 2015 is history and we can take a step back and analyze how it went. I plan on doing more operating this year and I plan on doing that in a more secluded area such as my camper. One reason for this is my inability to concentrate on listening to the radio when others are talking around me. That is another issue I have, concentration. I have been a ham for 36 years and concentration and mic shyness still are my Achilles Heel.

I spilled my guts about this subject so all the new hams out there know they are not out in that life boat alone. Even older hams have a lot to learn and feel comfortable about. Just keep looking for that comfort zone and work with it. A lot of older hams will help when and where they can.

Calendar

Tue. July 7

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

↔ Sat. July 11

South Milwaukee Amateur Radio Club Swapfest, 6:30 a.m., American Legion Post #434, 9327 S. Shepard Ave, Oak Creek.

↔ Sat. July 25

Rapid Deployment Amateur Radio (RaDAR)-America Contest, 14:00 UTC – 18:00 UTC.

Sat. Aug 1

↔ North American QSO Party, CW

Sun. Aug 8

↔ Riverland Amateur Radio Club Swapfest, 8 a.m.-1 p.m., Omni Center, 255 Riders Club Rd., Onalaska.

Sat. Aug 15

↔ North American QSO Party, SSB



Why do we list contests and contesting information? You may not be a contester and you may sneer at that screaming, yelling, pile-up crowd but there's a lot to be learned from them.

Contesters, at least the skilled ones who make the big points, know how to operate well. Very well! They have all the tricks, all the skills to hone their amateur radio operating to an extremely sharp edge. You can learn from them!

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
Secretary..... Carl Thurston, KC9HDS
Newsletter editor.. Bob Seaquist, W9LSE

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 W9LSE@arrl.net

Log rolling a memory prompt

By Bob Seaquist, W9LSE

How do you know what you've done? Do you remember your contacts? Were you running five watts or 500? What frequency were you on?

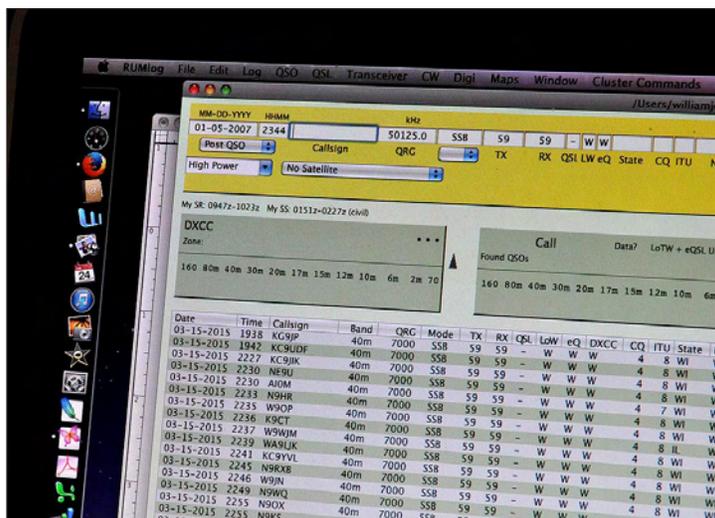
The law (FCC) says in Subpart B, 97.101(a) that "each amateur station must be operated in accordance with good engineering and good amateur practice." So.....when an FCC engineer is standing in your shack how do you prove you operated within the law?

The answer, and good practice, says keep a log even though it is no longer required!

Sidebar: back when I was in professional broadcasting endured a couple visits from the 'Commission. That was when there was a logging requirement and a good deal of other paper work that had to be flawless. The very serious 'Commission engineer scrutinized our logs up one side and down the other checking times, signatures, engineering data and more while we stood by perspiring. We never were cited though there always were little 'gigs' that had to be cleaned up which is not bad for being on the air every day of the year.

I still make sure my paperwork is in good order, in small part because of the rules, mostly as a reminder of the contacts I made. Maybe some day it will help me earn certificates such as WAZ, WAS or whatever.

A fun part of logging is the information an operator gets during a contact. As soon as you type a call into the electronic log the other operator's name, address, mileage from you and whether you have spoken with him before all pops up. The radio already told the computer the frequency, mode and power,



and the computer automatically figures out the time. Many electronic logs will run the radio for you including doing some keying, such as calling CQ. The log program would fully address and print a QSL card too! There are many things all these logs are able to do and just not enough time to learn them.

Oh...and it sends the information to LoTW (logbook of

the world, an ARRL database).

My shack has at least three different logs. The first one I have is the tried-and-true ARRL Mini log, a little pen and ink document. My primary computer is an iMac and I set it up with a German log called Rumlog (www.dl2rum.de/rumsoft/RUMLog.html) designed for Macs. It's free, it works really well and it is very powerful. On my net book is the N3FJP (www.n3fjp.com/) bundle of logs which did cost a little money -- about \$50 -- but it includes logs that are specifically for general logging, for Field Day and for many contests. It's slick and is also very powerful and well done. The club owns a copy of it which you used if you worked at our Field Day site. Another program on my net book is N1MM log <http://n1mm.hamdocs.com/> which is used by many Hams. It has been updated and now is called the N1MM+. It is also free.

The electronic logs are great but I'm concerned about losing computer data so for belt-and-suspenders I hand enter the contacts in a paper logbook after I've been operating.



Be square

Grid Square - An alphanumeric geographical coordinate system (usually four or six characters), based on the Maidenhead Locator System developed by VHF enthusiasts in 1980, in which the entire globe is divided into equal-sized rectangles denoted by alphanumeric codes. Grid squares are increasingly popular as contest exchanges, as they offer a challenge for successfully completing contest QSOs with accuracy, providing universal location information for all countries/states, and underpinning distance based scoring criteria.



Cutting the cable

By Carl Thurston, KC9HDS

With the constant advance of technology there is often a heavy price to pay. Many people pay this price with little thought, but here are some who after having been pushed ever closer to the edge, are rebelling against its advance. These individuals are not necessarily Luddites, nor are they unfamiliar with current technology, but rather they are merely fed up with the continual expansion of “services” offered “at no extra cost...for now” by the various purveyors of cable TV, Internet ISP, and or VOIP phone service. The cost of these “services” are as varied as the level of service itself. The minimal service i.e. only internet connection usually starts out at around 30 a month, but escalates to over 60 a month in a short time. Most people get “bundled” with all of these services at a cost of between \$150 to \$250 per month depending on how many bells and whistles are included in the package. Some feel that this is a form of highway robbery to charge so much for so little. For some time, I have been in pursuit of a means where by I could cut the cable, thus saving myself a sizable amount of money annually. Who wouldn't like to save \$1,200 per year or more?

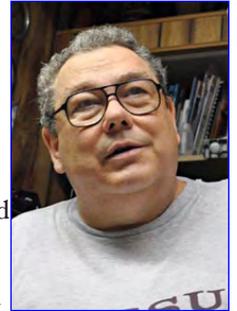
The question is how to do this without reverting to the stone age in the process. I must confess that as I was endeavoring to save money, I actually spent much money trying different options to free myself from the clutches of the cable company. It would be so easy, at least in theory, to cut the cable and revert to the nineteenth century, but who is really willing or able to do that? I set out to find a means of obtaining a free Internet connection, and having done so, achieve my goal of independence. Alas, I have yet to find such a free WIFI hot spot near me that I can tap into. I am still hopeful that there will be such a hot spot available to me at my location in the future, but for now, in order to remain connected to the rest of the world I must retain my connection from my ISP.

Losing cable TV was remarkably easy. After keeping a close track on which channels I watched on a regular basis, I found

that there was only one channel that I watched with regularity, the History Channel so named because its programming deals with historical events, or so one would presume. On that channel, one will find such historically significant shows as Axeman, Swamp People, Down East Dicking, American Pickers, Counting Cars, Ice Road Truckers, and many more. I found it very easy to ween myself from even that channel. I invested \$80 in an HDTV Digital Antenna, called a Cable Cutter. Yes I know, you are thinking that there is no such thing as a HDTV Digital Antenna and you are right. All I know is that I get 11 clear vivid channels with it at no additional cost.

The cable phone was another matter. This took a bit of experimentation and some added investments to achieve a usable phone. At first I tried something called a MagicJack Plus which cost \$40 and, at first, it wouldn't ring with an incoming call. The purchase of a compatible phone bumped up the price an additional \$6. It had a nasty habit of dropping out when calling out so I purchased an upgrade, MagicJack Go for another \$45, but that included a year's service with call waiting, caller ID, voice mail and unlimited long distance calling. It works great and I won't have another phone bill for a year!

The remaining cable service costs \$65 a month, but that is still a lot better than the \$150 for all of that stuff that we didn't want, need or use. Now there will be some extra money left over to do some special things. I never thought that cutting the cable would be so easy. I recommend it to anyone tired of paying more and more for things that you will likely never use. It better to put that money in your own pocket rather than the cable company's. Looking back, it was sort of risky to do this but all in all it was worth it. Now if I could just find a free WIFI hot spot, then I could cut off the rest of the cable!



Dan Abts, AB9TS, Bob Seaquist, W9LSE, and Carl Thurston, KC9HDS, show off this year's official Field Day shirt.



An old Kenwood transceiver draws attention.