

- **Club Picnic**
- **Dan Romanchik Blog**
- **Club Notes**



RIVERLAND ARC ANNUAL PICNIC...By Drew Neve, AB9NE

The Riverland Amateur Radio Club held its annual picnic with a noon start on Saturday, June 13, 2020 at Rowe Park in Onalaska. There were about 13 people in attendance near Shelter number 1. The weather was nice and the sun was out. There were some shade trees in the area, and a canopy went up for shade. A few members had hand-held radios to help with talk-in for others needing directions to get to the park, but radio activity was not the primary purpose of the picnic. Visiting with each other was the primary objective.

The picnic was a bit lower-key than previous years' picnics as this was the first picnic RARC has held since the COVID-19 pandemic began in 2020. It was the first face-to-face event since the March club meeting. We all hope that contagion will not be a concern for next year's picnic. Only one person there was a non-ham family member. She was able to connect with another XYL who is a ham, and made a new friend.

The club did not purchase any food or beverage for the picnic. It was entirely a "bring-your-own" affair this year due to COVID concerns. There was a small charcoal grill that one member brought, but most people with food just brought sandwiches (apart from the grape salad that Scott, KB3MKD, cleverly brought to taunt Kevin, KC9ZGD, knowing how much he loves it!).

The club did ensure that there were surface disinfectants available (four spray bottles with

mild bleach solution), and many attendees had hand-sanitizers.

People came with masks and had them available, but the masks came off as everyone showed that they were compliant with maintaining a respectful social distance from each other at the outdoor event. The conversation had its ebbs and flows, but was pretty continuous.



No vehicles on grass, what about the attendees?
More pictures on page 2.

The most prevalent topic was; of course, Field Day.

Field Day is coming up in a couple of weeks, and it moves further and further into members' discussions as the big weekend approaches. There is a cloud of uncertainty regarding Field Day. How many people will show up? Will they stick around and operate? Will a transmitter be on the air for only a few hours, then go silent because operators do not stay?

RIVERLAND ARC ANNUAL PICNIC...Continued from page 1

Field Day will be over by the time this is published, but there are many question marks as we are two weeks before the event. A good part of the discussion concerned club members who have announced that they will not join us at Field Day because of concerns regarding COVID. There was also discussion involving the ARRL rules changes giving clubs more flexibility to include Field Day scores earned by members who operate separately from their club.

All-in-all it was an enjoyable afternoon spent with friends and it wrapped up somewhere around 4:30.



Social distancing was the agenda for the day.



Look!! I am on the grass.



Securing PowerPole Connectors...By Dan Romanchik, KB6NU

In preparation for this year's Field Day, I made a bunch of cables with PowerPole connectors to connect the solar panel, charge controller and batteries that I used. If you're not familiar with PowerPoles, you might want to check out this YouTube video (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o3liuOcQ-jo>). They're really great connectors, and have become the DC connector of choice for many hams.

When I make up PowerPole cables, I normally don't bother trying to secure the two halves together, especially if you're using some decently heavy gauge wire. They fit together pretty tightly, and don't come apart easily. Even so, I think securing them together is a good idea. You can buy a little roll pin to insert between the red and black housings that is supposed to prevent them from coming apart, but many folks complain that the pin has a tendency to fall out. This not only defeats the purpose, but could also damage your equipment.

Securing them is the right thing to do, though, and I recently came across some great suggestions on how to do this in the daily digest that I receive from the Elecraft-KX mailing list (<https://groups.io/g/Elecraft-KX>). Here are the best tips from the thread, Securing Anderson Power Poles (<https://groups.io/g/Elecraft-KX/topic/75060413>):

- Rudy K8SWD: You can thermally bond the red and black housings with a soldering iron like you are making little welds on both sides. Permanent (mostly) but it works better than the roll pins. Just clean the tip really good before soldering!

- Dave K0CDA: [Anderson] also make connectors that are thermally bonded together in pairs. They do NOT come apart.

- Don W3FPR: I use a drop of Super Glue on the junction of the plastic pieces. Warning - that glue grabs quickly, so slide the 2 pieces only enough to start the assembly, then apply the drop of glue and quickly finish sliding them together. I have never had ones prepared like that come apart, and I don't use roll pins. I will say one more thing - use only the genuine APPs. I have seen some knockoffs that do not mate well.

- Greg KC9NRO: Take a hot soldering iron. Wipe the tip with sponge. Run the tip down both side of APP bonding the black and red sides together. Clean soldering iron tip and apply some solder to tip. That's how I roll. Never comes apart

- Mike AI4NS: PVC cement will soften the plastic enough to bond them together. You can also get plastic welding rods, such as Daindy Plastic Welding Rods (https://www.amazon.com/dp/B086H9QXM3/ref=cm_sw_r_cp_api_i_poR8Eb88N54P4). Chuck a rod in a Dremel and weld them together. I have made plastic boxes and panels using this method.

- Jack WD4E: Snip the cotton end off a Q-tip, cutting at an angle. Insert into hole made for roll pin, cut off excess, save remainder of Q-tip for next requirement.

- Troy K4JDA: 2.5mm screws work well, stay in, and are easily removable.



PowerPoles have become ubiquitous in amateur radio stations.

I posted these suggestions to my blog (<https://KB6NU.com>) and got a few more great suggestions:

- Tom KB8UUZ: Fat tooth picks also work great. Jam it in, break it off.
- Bruce N0NHP: I use MEK (Methyl Ethyl Ketone) replacement to clean my circuit boards after soldering. A single drop of MEK on the junction between the two halves of the PowerPole shell will fuse them. It can be broken with a sharp tap but not accidentally. It will set and dry in seconds and should be applied after the shell pieces are put together.

I think these are all great suggestions. I think that I'm going to try the cotton swab method. While reading them, another thought occurred to me. I haven't tried this yet, but I'm thinking a little drop of hot glue on the roll-pin hole might work, too.

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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 thinking up new ways to keep his PowerPoles together, he likes to teach ham radio classes and operate CW on the HF bands.



UPCOMING EVENTS FOR JULY 2020

July 7...Program Night, Ken, W9GM will do a Winlink demo via WebX at 7:00 PM.

July 20...Trustee Meeting, details to be worked out.

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

June 28, 2020	Kevin KC9ZGD
July 5, 2020	David KD9EPN
July 12, 2020	Shawn KD9KGQ
July 19, 2020	Carl KC9HDS
July 26, 2020	Mark KB9OFK
August 2, 2020	Rick KD9GVS

RIVERLAND AMATEUR RADIO CLUB

Monday, June 15th, 2020 Board Meeting

MINUTES

Call to order: 5:36 pm, 2236 UTC

Members Present : Dan AB9TS, David KB9EWG, Drew AB9NE, Shawn KD9KGQ, Rick KD9GVS, and Carl KC9HDS listening only

Approval of Minutes: Drew moved to accept last month's minutes, David seconded.

Treasurer's Report: Available upon request from Drew, AB9NE

Amazon Smile account set up for the Club, anyone purchasing items can indicate a donation to RARC.

Rick has one \$20 membership check in his possession to forward to Drew.

Officer's Report:

Old Business:

Drew will renew the Club's raffle license once last year's results are tallied.

Newsletter article about the picnic –Drew will try to write something up. David will send his photos of picnic to Greg for the Key.

Fox Hunt – no progress

Swap Fest – still on as of this writing, but depends on conditions at that time.

List of things to purchase for the Club – hold off on Swap Fest raffle prizes until status is known.

Committee Reports:

Repeater Committee – Dan spoke with Dan Rasmussen at WXOW about an internet connection at the repeater site but that's not going to happen due to restrictions from their IT department. Our own internet connection would be approx. \$45/month so that would not be feasible. The new 70cm control antenna donated by Steve, W9DXE has been installed at the repeater site and is working very well.

The 70cm side of the repeater is used for control at this time, do we have any feedback from WAR on frequency coordination ? Nothing seen, Shawn will check on this.

Dan noted C4FM users can connect to the W9UP room if desired, room #63956, to check it out and converse with other C4FM users.

WIRES-X was connected to the 444.475 repeater as a test, and worked well, but there are some issues, namely the courtesy tone was being transmitted as well.

Field Day – Rick will pick up Club trailer likely Saturday AM and deliver before 10:00am. Also will pick up David's ramps sometime before Field Day Saturday to deliver. Scott and Dan will be camping. Antenna and operating band usage needs to be coordinated, Dan and Drew will meet after this board meeting to discuss further, and possibly also take a trip to the site ahead of time.-- CLUB FIELD DAY ACTIVITIES HAVE BEEN CANCELLED AS OF 6-21-20 DUE TO AN ABUNDANCE OF CAUTION--

New Business :

Ken, W9GM will do a Winlink demo via WebX for the July Club meeting, David will contact him to confirm. For the August meeting, either Kevin's Las Vegas presentation or the boat ride will be considered.

Motion to Adjourn: 6:19pm, 2319 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. 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 2020 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

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