

THE KEY



The Riverland Amateur Radio Club is a Special Service Club affiliated with the American Radio Relay League

Repeater

146.970 PL 131.8



RARC Net

The club's weekly net is 8 p.m. Sundays on the 146.970 repeater.



Club meetings

Club meetings are 7 p.m., Tuesday, at Gundersen/Lutheran in La Crosse. They will be in meeting room 1 on the lower level of the clinic.

"Meeting of Elmers," advice, discussion and help is at 6 p.m. in the conference room in the Gundersen Clinic.



Field Day planning, dreaming, starts

Gardeners linger over their seed catalogues, bikers dream of warm breezes and flat roads and, this time of year, Hams fantasize about Field Day contacts.

ARRL Field Day, Fri. June 21 Sun. June 23, is on the minds of many and it's not too soon to discuss plans for Riverland Amateur Radio Club's participation in the event, according to club president Greg Miller, KA9FOZ.

For one, your editor has delusions of being able to work CW and score the bonus points it brings. In addition, he is scanning antenna designs hoping for something better for HF contacts and something that may enable at least one satellite contact also a bonus possibility. Oh...there is also a plan to set up a workable solar charging device for the new solar panels obtained for pennies on the dollar.

Extending the fantasy planning, your editor believes he may stay on site the entire 24 hour period rather than the rational retreat

to the air conditioned comfort of home.

I am not alone.

Field Day is the stuff of dreams when we're trapped in our wintery shacks and it is the stuff of experimentation, imagination and good fellowship during those brief hours in June.

The official, ARRL, version of Field Day shows military type operations that have "band captains," elaborate antenna farms, large tents, generators and a visiting governor munching the gourmet buffet. Some guys myself included have felt some frustration that our club was not doing that very same thing. But then I spent some time viewing YouTube videos proudly displayed by other clubs. By comparison and sometimes contrast the Riverland Amateur Radio Club's Field Day operations are the epitome of Ham Radio organization. We may be "casual" but we're out there having fun and lots of it. This coming June it should be even better.



*The proper way to greet another ham operator?
With a Short Wave !*

Visit the RARC Web page at <http://rarc.qth.com/> to find information about the club and links to other Ham related sites.

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President's Frequency Modulation

By Greg Miller, KA9FOZ

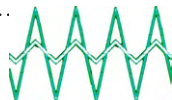
Procrastinate: to put off intentionally and habitually that which must be done.

I guess I fit that category. I know I let things go too long. Why do it today when I can do it tomorrow? When I get around to doing the job it is so late that I am pushing myself too much to get it done. This is what causes mistakes. That is why I am looking forward farther than I have in the past. Such as Field Day which is four months away. Field Day planning needs to start now, so it will be one of the main topics at the club meeting March 5.

We need to get the committee set and start making plans, especially location and how we want to approach it this year. Last year I believe all had a good time so we need to build on that. I know from my own experience from last year there are things that I can improve on so that will be my goal. What about you? Maybe you did not attend last year so how about this year make it a point to stop in and see what is going on? Maybe lend a hand where needed. As they say the more the merrier.

Looking farther ahead will be to the swapfest. Planning for this event needs to start sooner than later also. We need to get the discussion of the swapfest started so it can be a better attended event. Here again, if you did not attend last year make plans to be there and see what is happening.

These two activities take the most planning and work to make them successful so please be part of the brain storming. Every suggestion has its merits. Even if you don't attend the club meeting's we still want to hear your suggestions or comments on either event. These are club activities and everyone should be part of it. I can be e mailed at gmillero10@centurytel.net or call me at 608 792 7841 and we can have a discussion.



Net news quiz

How do you like your net? Net Control Ron Friego, N9UEZ, asks feedback on the Sunday Night Net's format so it may better serve members.

Take a few moments on the following survey and forward your answers to Newsletter Editor Bob Seaquist, KC9IWE, at kc9iwe@arrl.net

1. Do you participate in the Sunday Night Net?
2. Should there be a recorded newscast?
3. Would you prefer Newsline?
4. Would you prefer ARRL News?
5. What other features would you prefer?

Bill Wood, KE9XQ, wonders if there is interest in discussing such topics as: pirate radio; regenerative radios; recycling old TVs radios, VCRs etc.; digital power supplies; learning about microprocessors; learning about DSP entry level boards; keyboarding like the old packet days; stealth antennas; oscilloscopes.

Mark Cassellius, KB9OFK, Friego and Seaquist will also ask for your input during the next Sunday Night Nets.

VE testing for licensing

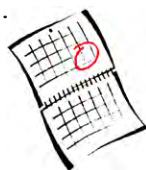
The next RARC VE testing for licensing will be Saturday, May 4, 9 a.m. at the American Red Cross office, 2927 Losey Blvd. S., La Crosse.

Those wishing to test must contact Roger Reader, KA9BKK, 608 783 0723 or readers@centurytel.net, to register in advance. No walk ins.

Calendar

Tue. Mar. 5

Riverland Amateur Radio Club meeting, 7 p.m., Gundersen/Lutheran.



Wed. Mar. 6

South Milwaukee Amateur Radio Club Auction, 7 p.m., American Legion Post #434, 9327 S. Shepherd Ave., Oak Creek.

Sat. Mar. 9

Eau Claire Amateur Radio Club 26th Annual Equipment Auction, 8 a.m., Grace Lutheran Church, 202 W. Grand Ave., Eau Claire.

Sun. Mar. 10

Wisconsin QSO Party, 1 to 8 p.m. www.warac.org/wqp/wqp.htm

Riverland Amateur Radio Club

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Vice president..... Van Elston, WA9FIO
Treasurer..... Tom O'Brien, WB9BJQ
Secretary..... Carl Thurston, KC9HDS
Newsletter editor.. Bob Seaquist, KC9IWE
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 KC9IWE@arrl.net

Severe weather spotter training set



Severe weather spotter training sessions for the La Crosse area are slated to begin March 22 with a Webinar. The National Weather Service announced a reduced schedule but added Webinars and will possibly add more if the need exists.

Most sessions are open to the general public with no need to pre register. All training is free and usually lasts around two hours.

The NWS recommends spotters to participate in training every other year.

There are also on line storm spotter training materials available at www.crb.noaa.gov/arc/?n=skywarn_schedule

Refer questions about Skywarn to the NWS Skywarn FAQ page www.crb.noaa.gov/arc/?n=skywarnfaq

Refer questions to Warning Coordination Meteorologist Todd Shea.

Tornado awareness drill April 18

April 15-19 is Tornado and Severe Weather Awareness Week in Wisconsin.

A statewide tornado drill is planned Thursday, April 18. The drill is an opportunity for spotters to practice net procedures for severe weather.

The mock tornado watch will be issued at 1 p.m. and the mock tornado warning will be at 1:45 p.m.

The drill will be postponed until Friday, April 19, if there is a threat of severe weather in Wisconsin on Thursday. The drill will go on in all other conditions including non-severe weather clouds, rain, dark sky, scattered thunderstorms, etc. If severe weather occurs on Friday, the drill will be cancelled.

Skywarn training available locally

Fri., March 22, 10 a.m.,	Webinar Must e-mail: Todd Shea for access information
Mon., March 25, 6:30 p.m.,	Viroqua High School Cafetorium 100 Blackhawk Dr.
Tue., April 9, 2 p.m.,	On-line Webinar, Must e-mail: Todd Shea for access information
Tue., April 9, 6:30 p.m.,	HoChunk Tribal Office Atrium, W9814 Airport Road, BRF
Tue., April 16, 6:30 p.m.,	Mayo Clinic Health System La Crosse, Marycrest Aud./2nd Floor

Reasons to operate in the WIQP

By Fred Helmstetter, N9FH

This year's running of the WIQP is right around the corner. Some people are sure to get on every year and always have a blast. Other hams either occasionally participate or have never given the WIQP a try. Here are 10 good reasons why you should fire up the radio Sunday, March, 10 1 p.m. local time and join in the fun.

WIQP is our state QSO party in which hams try to contact as many other stations as possible during the contest period seven hours on Sunday afternoon and evening. Lots of other states have similar events but ours is one of the best in terms of in state and out of state activity. During the WIQP Hams located in Wisconsin can contact stations anywhere for credit while people outside of the state only work Wisconsin stations. Each of the 72 counties in Wisconsin counts as a score multiplier and for in state participants other US states and Canadian provinces are multipliers as well. The exchange is your county if in Wisconsin and your state/province if outside. So the idea is to contact and accurately log as many stations as possible in as many different counties/states/provinces as possible.

The ham with a typical small station is in a very good position to do well. Most of the important contacts for Wisconsin operators are made within a few hundred miles and local activity tends to favor the 80 and 40 meter bands. As for power, since the rules were changed several years ago to include a



power multiplier, very few people seem to be running more than 100 watts.

While most contacts are on the HF bands you may be surprised to see how many people you can find on VHF and UHF. If you only have a 2m radio and a vertical antenna you might want to hang around the FM simplex frequencies and see who you can find (146.55 is usually good).

There are an awful lot of hams that don't have a burning interest in HF operating but do like to get on maybe once a year for ARRL Field Day with their buddies. As with many skills, when it comes to being comfortable and proficient in front of a radio there is no substitute for practice. If you want to be a little smoother at Field Day this year then consider putting in some time during WIQP. You can practice your contest style exchanges, get familiar with a new radio or logging software, or try out a new idea for a portable antenna.

Some ops tend to try to keep it moving as fast as possible while others will take some time to "ragchew" and catch up a bit. It is a QSO party after all which amounts to a great way to get as many Wisconsin hams and interested others on the air at the same time.

The most important reason to get on for WIQP is that it loads of fun. There's something in it for everybody from the hard core contester to the casual mobile op with a 2m FM rig taking the kids to their afternoon activities.

For more information about the WIQP go to www.warac.org

The Gremlins are back

By Carl Thurston, KC9HDS

Some of you may remember the running battle that I, the “Hapless Ham,” fought with the Gremlins that plagued my radio shack. In hindsight it is a rather amusing tale. For several months now I was of the opinion that I had chased off those beasts once and for all. Except for some of my equipment that requires special intense attention, everything in my shack is working, as intended and I’ve been very successful in making QSOs around the world. I’ve had especially good luck working mobile, or should I say semi mobile, as I mount my Opek on my car and run a coax to where my station is set up and running from batteries, I make my contacts.

Yes I’ve been very lucky with the success that took place at our Trempealeau Wildlife Refuge Special Event of the last two years, as well as the same with the SkyWarn Appreciation Day events, and Winter Field Day hosted at the La Crosse National Weather Service office, high on the top of the ridge on Granddad Bluff. It has been fun, enlightening, and Gremlin free. It hasn’t been quite so nice around my QTH though. I admit that I’ve been preoccupied with things other than the

maintenance of my house, especially lately as the days tick down to my retirement.

There have been so many details that need immediate attention out side of my home that things at my QTH have been allowed to slide a bit. You might say that a burned out light bulb is no great thing to be concerned about, but when there is a burned out light in the living room, one in the kitchen, a switch that mysteriously breaks on a bedside lamp, a pair of wall outlets that no longer function, and a clock that has stopped chiming; I can only infer that those pesky Gremlins have returned.

It seems that since I had so thoroughly defeated them when it came to my radio equipment that they decided to attack the very electrical system of my house. Instead of being able to enjoy a peaceful weekend with kith and kin, I find myself putting on the electrician’s hat and getting down and dirty with the various results of Gremlin mischief.

Those Gremlins may have the upper hand for the moment, but I, the Hapless Ham will not rest until they are once again on the run. At least that is my plan, but as anyone who has been plagued with Gremlins knows, they



can be knocked down but they always seem to come back. They are like crab grass, the more you dig them up the more they spread to other areas. As time goes by, I have learned how to deal with this and I have grown to realize that there is no end to these things, one must continually work to root them out. It may be a no win situation but there really isn’t an alternative if you expect to be able to make progress. Just because Gremlins are forever, you don’t have to like it, but you do have to fight it. Once in a while you might have a time of peace where those rascals are off bothering someone else, and that may be all that you can expect until the Gremlins are back again.

Be a better listener

By Dennis Rybicki, K9LGU/STM-WI

How can we be better listeners?

Static crashes, heterodynes, fading, high noise levels, and other sources of interference call for some specialized listening. Even with modern receiver technology, it can come down to an operator’s listening skills.

- ❑ Reduction of the RF gain and insertion of filters can help, but an operator can enhance the process, too.

- ❑ Using headphones reduces local noise. Concentration on the incoming signal can really help.

- ❑ Knowing voices or “fists” can enhance intelligibility. That’s why we sometimes visit the traffic nets. It familiarizes us with

voice patterns, inflection, and pauses in other operators’ sending.

- ❑ Being comfortable with the NTS and ICS 213 message formats prompts an operator on what to listen for next.

- ❑ Frequent use of the ITU phonetic alphabet makes it another weapon in the arsenal of on the air listening.

- ❑ The normal syntax of sentences can give us clues to what we’re listening for.

- ❑ Practice in contests, DX pile ups, or under poor conditions will build listening skills, too.

If we consciously try to improve our listening, it will happen.

WORD TO THE WISE

Single-band - If you want to really “learn” a band, operate in a major contest as a single-band entry. Instead of moving up and down in frequency, you’ll be able to stay with the band as it opens and closes, including long-path and skew-path openings that a multi-band entry often misses. What’s out there in the middle of the night? You might be surprised!