

# THE KEY

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



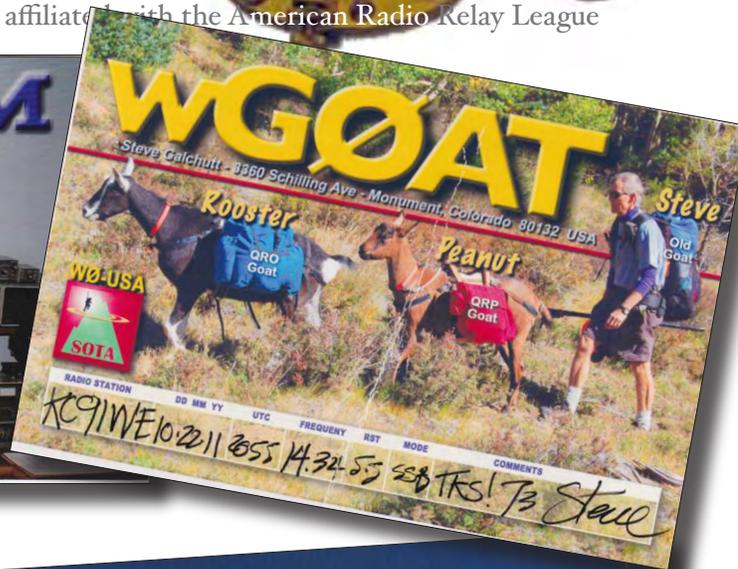
Riverland Amateur Radio Club  
P.O. Box 621  
Onalaska, Wis. 54650

Repeater  
146.970 PL 131.8

RARC Net  
8 p.m. Sundays on the 146.970 repeater.

Club meetings  
7 p.m., Tuesday, March 3, meeting room 1, lower level, Gundersen/Lutheran La Crosse. **Elmer session** 6 p.m.

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



## QSL?

First there's the contact, delicious sparks and static with a far-off Ham and then, sometimes after months or even years, a QSL card that is glorious, full color proof of that contact. It is a nudge of the memory when it's crossed in a scrapbook or noticed on the wall. QSL cards can be a golden medallion of success for a Ham radio contact. They are a long honored tradition in Amateur Radio.



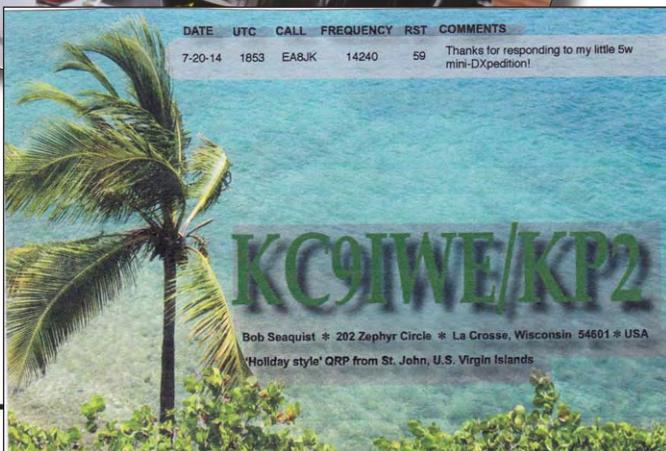
There will be a look at QSL cards Tuesday, March 3, at the Riverland Amateur Radio Club meeting.

reception of a signal from an AM radio, FM radio, television or shortwave broadcast ing station. A typical QSL card is the same size and made from the same material as a typical postcard, and most are sent through the mail as such.

There is a quaint, but well ordered, procedure where cards are mailed to "the Bureau" and subsequently sent on to the Ham. A relatively new twist has cards sent electronically which automates the process and makes it almost instantaneous.

QSL card derived its name from the Q code "QSL," which means "do you confirm receipt of my transmission?"

A QSL card is a written confirmation of either a two way radiocom munication between two amateur ra dio stations or a one way



## Calendar

### Tue. Mar. 3

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

### Wed. Mar. 4

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

### Thu. Mar. 5

↔ Skywarn training, 6:30 p.m. Ho Chunk Admin. Bldg., W9814 Airport Road, Black River Falls.

### Sun. Mar. 15

↔ Tri County Amateur Radio Club Hamfest, Jefferson.

↔ Wisconsin QSO Party, [www.warac.org/wqp/wqp.htm](http://www.warac.org/wqp/wqp.htm)

### Wed. Mar. 18

↔ Skywarn training, 10 a.m. On Line Webinar, register by e mailing [todd.shea@noaa.gov](mailto:todd.shea@noaa.gov)

### Sat. Mar. 21

↔ AES Superfest, 9 a.m. 3 p.m., 5710 W Good Hope Rd., Milwaukee.

### Tue. Mar. 24

↔ Skywarn training, 6:30 p.m., Decorah City Hall Council Chambers

### Sun. Mar. 29

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

### Tue. Mar. 31

↔ Skywarn training, 6:30 p.m., Rochester International Event Center, Rochester

## President's Frequency Modulation

By Greg Miller, KA9FOZ

February is a short month but just the same I have been playing a lot of radio lately. I have been checking into the Ten Tec Net as well as monitoring the '97 repeater and trying to check in there as often as I can. It all started with having my grandson come over and help me drill a 5/8" diameter hole through concrete and driving another ground rod 10 feet deep. This is the third ground rod I have put in around my shop. I have been properly grounding my radios and this has prompted me to turn them on and use them.

Sometimes it does not take much to stir the interest in me to get back to my hobby. I have been pushing myself to get some things done around the shop that I have put off for way to long. When I complete one of the projects it does something in me and I turn on the radio and call out a CQ or I answer one. The other day I listened to somebody calling CQ for one of two states. He was after his worked all states WAS award. In this case I just listened hoping he got what he was after. Well he didn't but he did get a lot of other states answering him and a lot of good conversations occurred.

We have important club business and because we cancelled our February meeting due to inclement weather we have a lot to cover at the March 3 meeting.

It's time to plan communication coverage for community events and we need to think about Field Day, the swap meet and other events.

We need members to step up and help! Kevin Holcomb, KC9ZGD, will handle the walks and bike ride again this year. He did a great job last year and I am sure he will do just as good this year. If you can participate let Kevin. Field Day is looking for a committee chair and I am hoping Dan will do it again. The swap meet date and place is set and I will chair this again and am looking for help with that. We plan to expanding the swap in the Omni Center for an even bigger and better swap meet.

Is there something you would like to see the club do? If so let us know, if it's ham radio we will give it a try.

If you're driving the Interstate headed toward the Sparta area check out 146.595 simplex, you will find a great group of hams to rag chew with. That is what this hobby is all about.



Hams that want to send QSL cards have a couple tried and true methods. One is to find a specialty printer such as [cheapqsls.com](http://cheapqsls.com) and have them do it. Another is to make your own.

Home made QSL cards are easy. Office supply stores usually have the card stock like Avery 5389 which are made to work in ink jet printers. Add a photo of yourself or your station, set aside space for necessary confirming information such as date, time, frequency etc. and you're good to go!

**SERGE CHURIKOV**

**R U S E G**

### 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, KC9IWE  
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)

# The cool Qs of Winter Field Day

By Bob Seaquist, KC9IWE

Winter is the best time for playing on the radio except when it's summer, spring or fall and playing on the radio outside is like frosting on the cake. A great example of this is the annual Winter Field Day which was Jan. 24 this year.

Encouraged by a bright, sunny day and wanting to escape the painful imprisonment of January in the house I gathered some gear, threw it into the truck and headed for Granddad Bluff Park. The parking area at the very top seemed like a good location mostly because it is near a rest room. It was a "warm" day for January hitting the mid 30s which not only was quite comfortable and much, much more comfortable than my first Winter Field Day. The nice weather drew scores of visitors to the park, many who stopped and asked what I was doing.

My set-up was a modified "Carl," drawing on KC9HDS's mobile arrangement. I placed my Yaesu FT 897D on the truck's dashboard, powering it with a large wheelchair battery. The antenna was a vertical, but departing from KC9HDS's ridiculous dummy load which improbably scores contacts, I erected a Buddipole vertical tuned for 20m.

The fun began immediately! I was a few minutes late for the event start so there were stations up and down 20m calling. In past years WFD stations were few and far between but not this year. I did a little search and pounce then set up at 14265 and went to work for myself. For the little more than two and half hours I averaged what seemed like two per minute the word "seemed" is important here and had some delightful contacts.

## Repeater Note

By Van Elston, WA9FIO

There are some great, fun tools for getting messages on our '97 repeater. Enjoy yourself trying and remember that you must identify yourself!

Keypad	
8	Let up on the mike, repeater will say "start test now", then talk for up to seven seconds. Let up on the mike and the repeater will replay what you just said so you can judge your own signal report.
88	Let up on the mike and you will get an "You are over 59"
72501	Club meeting time and place announcement
72502	Monthly announcement presently blank
72508	Net news and information announcement
72509	Repeater welcome message
72513	Repeater tail announcement occurs on its own when the repeater has been off 10 minutes)



For simplicity I did a paper log so it wasn't until later entering contacts in the WFD N3FJP log that I found out I had spoken with N3FJP himself, Scott Davis! The log lets you know this very clearly. Even though the N3FJP Amateur Contact Log costs a few dollars 24.99 and the WFD version was 8.99 it is a good value and a very nice electronic log. Davis lets you sample it with a good number of contacts and he offers a package deal for all his logs.

Anyhow I was happily making "Qs" and visiting with folks coming to the park when all the coffee I had consumed wanted to unconsume. "Aha," I thought. It's a quick stroll to the very nice rest room. And it was. Right up to the locked door. The antenna came down, the radio was pulled from the dash and Winter Field Day was history.

There's a sad postscript to Winter Field Day. The Hams that constitute the sponsoring club, SPARS Society for the Preservation of Amateur Radio wonder if they can continue the event and even the organization. Apparently all are elderly and increasingly infirm. In response to many Hams asking how to submit logs they finally have responded that they may not be able to continue.

### Things to do

The third of the three North American QSO Parties is on this weekend - RTTY is the mode. Enjoy a Saturday of digital dabbling. The next weekend wraps up the ARRL DX contest with the phone edition - Technicians in particular will enjoy the worldwide action on 10 meters!

### WiQP helps county hunters

Worked All Wisconsin Counties applicants may claim Wisconsin QSO Party contacts: The West Allis Radio Amateur Club has announced that applicants for its Worked All Wisconsin Counties WAWC award now may claim Wisconsin QSO Party contacts for award credit. The Wisconsin QSO Party takes place Sunday, March 16. WAWC applicants may claim Wisconsin QSO Party contacts without a QSL card. Applicants must indicate QSO Party contacts on the entry form, and the club will utilize the QSO Party database to confirm them.



## Take the Extra Class challenge

By Bill Wood, KE9XQ

Several already are taking the challenge. They set the goal and are pursuing their Extra Ticket.

I'm back to goad **you** to a little more.

There is a way to get your ticket without even understanding the questions in your test. Memorization. With 500 questions that might be a little hard, and if you were to do it, please don't tell everyone. Here's the idea. Take the mock test on line, take it 10 times a day or as often as you can every day. Pretty soon you'll be acing the test, without

even looking at the schematic or part diagram. I know of people that have done this, so while I think it is hard, it is doable. There is a better way. Buy the handbook. If you are serious about your hobby or the service aspect, you'll want to know what is going on, at least have a good idea of what makes that little doo hicky act that way. So read the books, talk to Hams, get one of those little breakfast clubs going and challenge each other. Make your goal realistic by dedicating the next month or three to

the subject. Like an insurance company I worked for always said, "work today like no one else does, and then live tomorrow like no one else can." You see the philosophy behind that? If you put your efforts into the subject right now, you'll have the rest of your life to rest on your laurels. Don't let that monster procrastination knock at your door!



## The need to communicate

By Carl Thurston, KC9HDS

One of the things that makes us human is the need to communicate. Many Hams understand this. However, there are times when communication breaks down. This breakdown can occur when the infrastructure of normal communication fails. In the recent past we saw this when a tornado ripped through South La Crosse, tearing up parts of buildings, trees and telephone lines. Cell phone service was overloaded from people seeking emergency help and reporting damage. When that happened, the true need for Amateur Radio was clear. Other instances of this have been the floods that plagued Rushford Minn. The response and aid rendered by Winona Amateurs at that time stands as a perfect example of what Amateur Radio operators can offer in an emergency.

The examples can be easily understood, especially by those who were directly affected.

Few in the public are aware of how important communication is, until there is difficulty doing it. No one wishes to see emergencies happen, but when they do, it is good to know that the efforts of Amateur Radio operators are there, using their own equipment to forge a link in the broken line of communication. What happens when

the Amateur Radio community has a communication failure? Recently, a split second decision was made, and rightly so, to call off the February RARC meeting due to inclement weather. The day of the meeting suddenly turned into a nasty snow storm, right at the height of rush hour. Our president, Greg Miller, KA9FOZ, felt that it was not advisable to have our members put themselves and others at risk by trying to make their way through that storm to get to the meeting. He quickly made the decision to call off the meeting, but how could he communicate that information to the membership? Putting the message on the repeater was obvious, but how could he be sure that the members would have their radios on? The best that could be done in the time allowed, it was after 4 p.m., was to call Van Elston, WA9FIO, on the land line and have him put an announcement on the repeater that would inform all of the cancellation. This was a good idea, but even with that effort, several members arrived at the meeting site, unaware of the cancellation. They held an impromptu meeting and all was well. No one was hurt by the lack of communication this time.

Granted, this is a rare occasion. There may be other such incidents in the past, but none come to mind. Granted,



this was not a real emergency. Had the meeting not been called off, it is doubtful that it would have mattered to most. The possibility of harm coming to members was of utmost importance, therefore the cancellation. This brings up the question; what if this was a life threatening situation? What if many of the members were not aware of the hazard? What if some one was injured trying to make it to the meeting? What can be done to mitigate such a situation? How can we be better prepared for such an eventuality? These are things that we need to resolve.

What good is our ability to respond to a major emergency if we can't communicate important information to our members quickly when the need arises? We need to think about this and come up with a workable plan to keep everyone informed. Feedback from the membership might provide some possible answers. Some special communication is needed here.