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The Doldrums...de Carl KC9HCS

As the time wears on with this pandemic, I feel like we are trapped in a doldrum of sorts, where we are be stilled by a lack if a breeze to move us on. I know that everyone must feel as I do that we have all had enough of this COVID thing. It isn't bad enough that we are subjected to the threat for being infected with the virus itself, but we are also infected emotionally with the necessity of being extra careful about how we protect ourselves from it.

A lot of people, myself included, are longing for a time when we can pitch the masks, the hand sanitizer, and the social distancing that we are subjected to, and get back too some sort of normalcy. People talk about "the New Normal" that has been forced upon us by this situation. The question on many people's minds is when will this end? When can we resume our lives and live as we always have, free and open to meet with friends and family face to face again?

So much of what we have taken for granted in the past is just that, in the past, and that is not normal. Humans are social creatures that need to have personal contact with others on a regular basis. This may be the greatest problem that this pandemic has forced us to

deal with. Oh yes, we are aware that the virus itself is pervasive, omni present, and deadly on a physical level, but the most insidious result of it may be the psychological effect that long term isolation and idleness has brought to us all.

At the risk of being accused of "beating a dead horse" here, I feel that we must face this problem with determination and patience. It too will pass, that is certain, the question is can we as a society survive this experience? The disruption of every day life is deep and profound. Many of the places that we like to frequent are no longer open to us, at least not the way that they were. Schools, churches, restaurants and bars are slowly starting to reopen. The safety of some of these things is not certain as we try to navigate the still waters of this doldrum. It is so easy to start to let our guard down and revert to what we were used to. So many people have expressed how they feel that their freedom has been impinged upon by the necessity of safe practices. The common thought is that we need to get moving in a more satisfactory direction, but it is difficult to make headway when we

are subjected to forced isolation and idleness.

Many of our leaders differ on just how we should proceed and when things will return to the free and open way that we are used to. The pressure to resume our lives in a more agreeable way is so very tempting and strong. You see it everywhere you look that people are not taking many of these things seriously. Masks are an annoyance for sure and so is constantly cleaning everything that you touch. These are things that no one wants to do, at least not so assiduously, but this virus doesn't care about this. It just keeps rolling on and on until we finally manage to defeat it. I'm confident that we will, but it means that we must be persistent in our caution when dealing with our personal protection. Far too many have succumbed to this virus as a result of not being careful enough. It is a fact that we have passed the total number of fatalities this has caused, compared to the total number of fatalities that our country's servicemen and women suffered during World War I and II combined. It won't be too much longer before that total will exceed the totals of all of the fatalities of all of the wars fought by us as a nation.



PRESIDENTS COMMENTS

March is here, time is flying!

- Spring is rapidly approaching as well as are some planned Club activities. Very near is the St Patrick's Day parade on March 13th. Our Club has been asked to help with covering intersections for participant and spectator safety. We have 8 volunteers already, but are in need of 5 more. If you are able to help out that day from about 11:00 until 1:00 please let me or Shawn KD9KGG know ASAP.
- Remember that the RARC Club e-mail "reflector" is out there for all Club members to post an announcement, information, or question related to Ham radio. The address is members@rarc.qth.com.
- Also remember the Saturday morning "ragchew" on the 146.970 repeater at 8:00 AM.
- Also stay tuned for other new communication tools that are in the works.
- Our March program night meeting will be on the 2nd at 7:00 PM. Our presenter this month is Carl Luetzelschwab, K9LA. The presentation will cover solar topics (cycle 25 and it's progress) and propagation topics. Mr. Luetzelschwab has written papers on various topics and had a distinguished career at Motorola and Magnavox. The Zoom meeting link will be forwarded a day or so before the meeting, and can also be found elsewhere in this newsletter.
- If you haven't mailed in your 2021 membership renewal, those are now due.
- I am also excited to announce plans are in the works for a Club picnic this summer, as well as plans to bring back the Swapfest in August. Stay tuned for further updates.
- Also a reminder if you have any submissions for the Club Newsletter, The Key, please send them to our editor, Kelley Becker at kelleyLL23@hotmail.com.
- Also for your on-line purchases, please remember to try smile.amazon.com and designate 0.5% of your purchase to be donated to your favorite charitable organization, the RARC ! There is no cost to you and you get the same products, prices, and services as regular Amazon.

Feel free to contact me with any other comments or suggestions at rckolter@gmail.com.

73 for now,

Rick KD9GVS



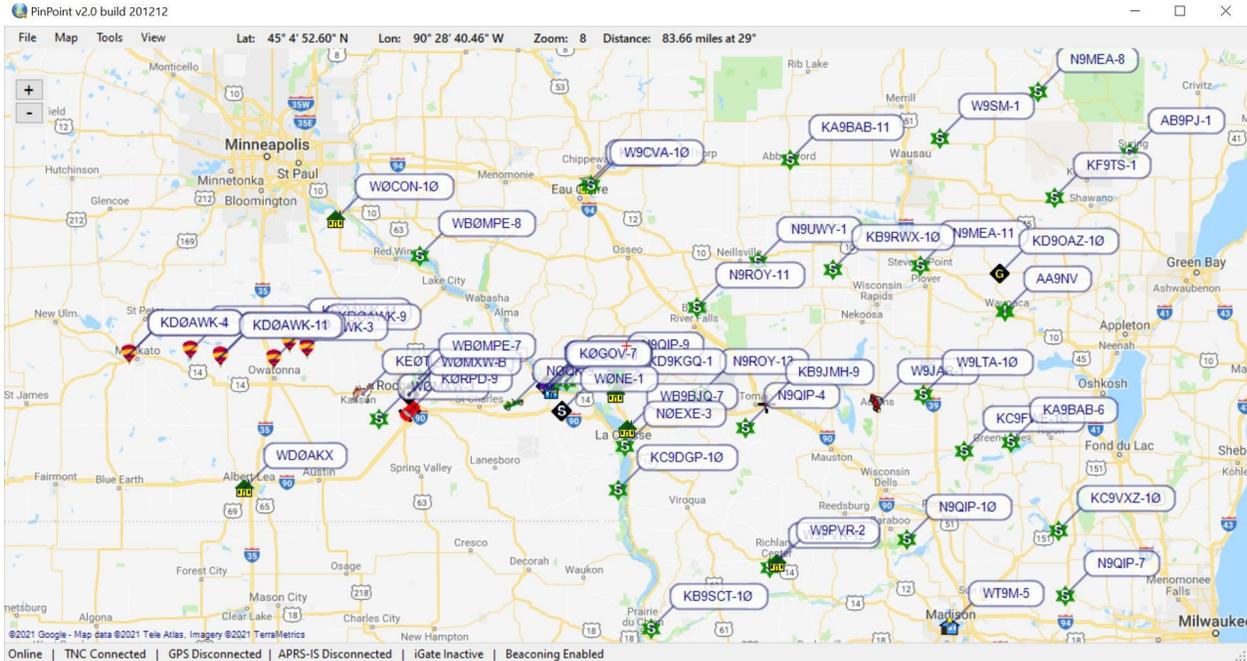
PinPoint APRS

Most hams reading this article are likely already familiar with APRS. For those that are not, I will give some background information before discussing the PinPoint APRS software. The acronym APRS stands for Automatic Packet Reporting System. APRS uses several technologies working together to transmit GPS data in packet bursts via RF to other ham stations and digi-peaters. This data can also be sent via the internet.

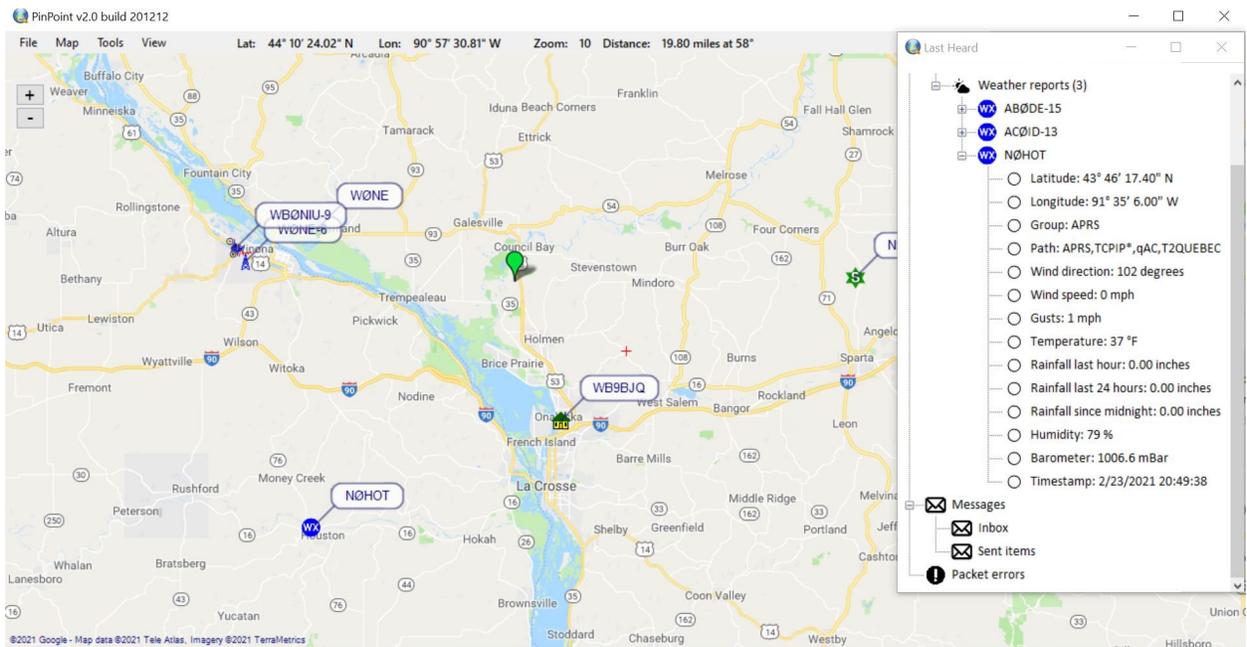
Armed with an APRS capable mobile radio such as a Kenwood DM-D710G, a ham operating while driving down the interstate can broadcast his/her location at regular intervals. In the US, these packet bursts are transmitted on 144.390 MHz. Fellow hams receiving this RF data coming directly from the mobile station or through digi-peaters (and possibly digi-peaters hooked to the internet) can track the mobile station's progress. Likewise, a ham with a Yaesu FT3DR handheld venturing out for a nature walk can also be tracked with APRS. At first glance the thought of hams tracking other hams via RF may seem a little silly and pointless at best, however APRS has an appropriate and worthwhile application in our club's volunteer events and EMCOMM.

APRS can be used in different ways and with a multitude of equipment configurations. There are several APRS software programs available for use. There is even a mobile phone app. However, this article will focus on the PinPoint APRS software I have been using in my ham shack. It is not my intent to promote this software over any other, but rather to make you aware of its existence and some of its features.

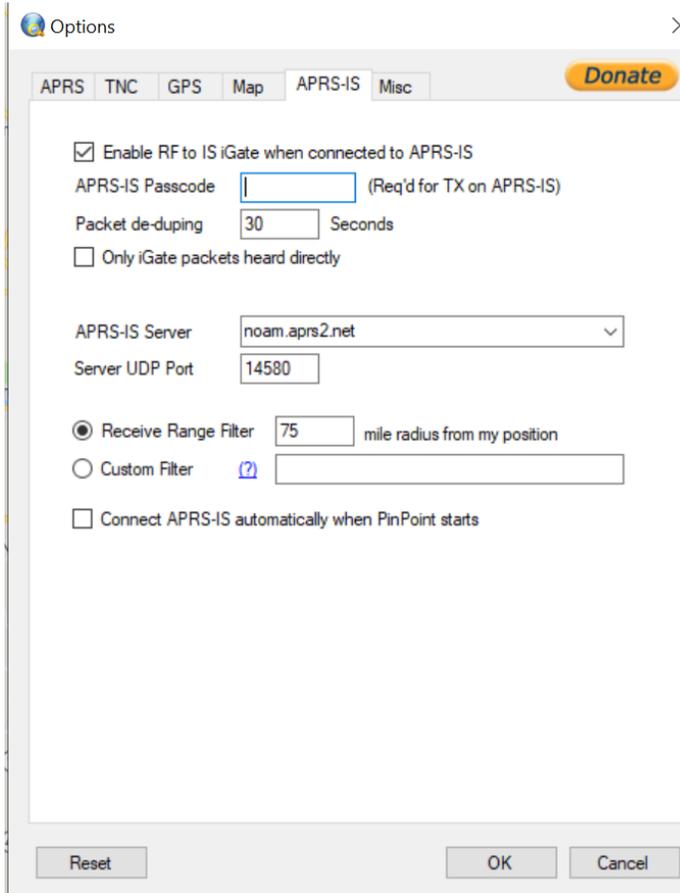
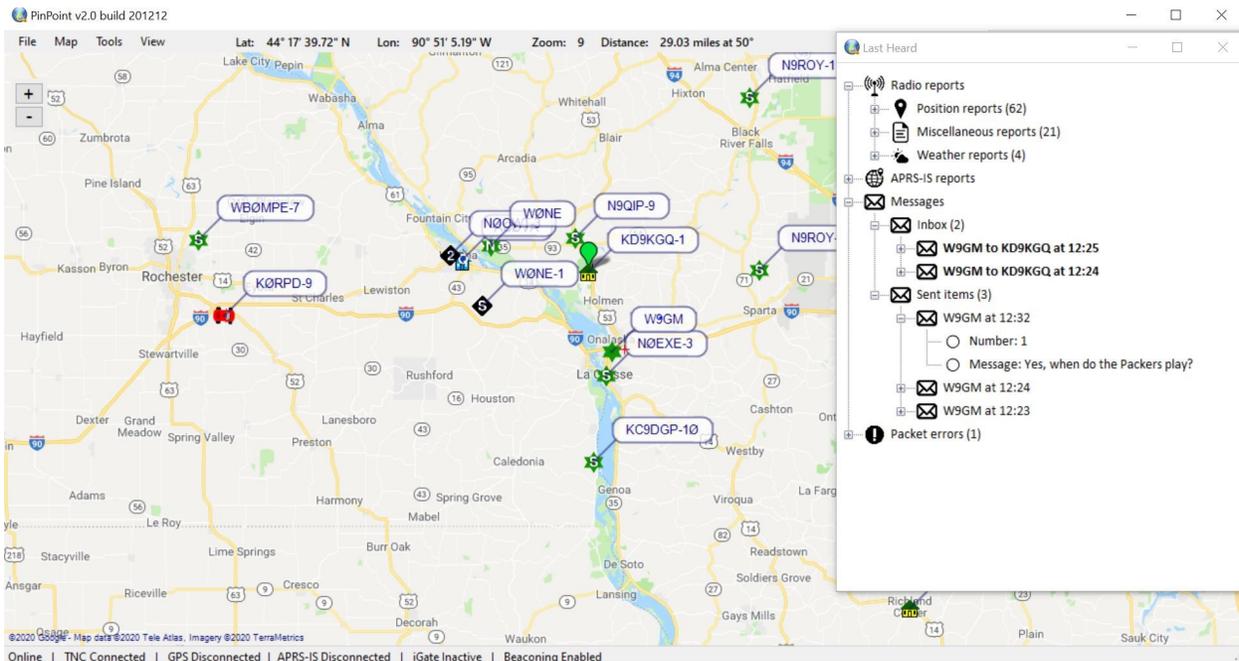
I first became aware of PinPoint APRS after seeing a write up on it in QST while I was still a Technician. The software download and use of it is free. It can be located online at <https://pinpointaprs.com/download.html>. I encourage anyone who may have even the slightest interest in APRS to download it and try it out. You can use the software almost immediately if you have an internet connection and start getting packet reports when connected via APRS-IS. This allows you to experiment with the software without having to make any additional investment. If you find that APRS isn't for you, then you're not out any money. For me the fun and lure of using APRS, is getting position reports via RF without an over reliance on commercial infrastructure. Setup with a Yaesu 857D radio, Comet GP-9 base antenna, Signalink, SoundModem by UZ7HO soft TNC software, and a laptop with Pin Point APRS; I can get position reports from all over the state and beyond. The screenshot image below was taken on February 6th. All position reports were coming into my ham shack via RF digi-peaters. You can observe on the bottom of the screen that my TNC was connected and that the APRS-IS (internet) was disconnected. My position (KD9KGQ-1) can be seen in approximately the center of the picture. If you look at the left side of the picture, you will see several APRS balloons labeled KD0AWK-4, KD0AWK-11, KD0AWK-3, and KD0AWK-9. There is a limit to the number, but each ham can have multiple APRS connected transmitters going at once. This is an example of that ability. I first started tracking these balloons when they were flying over Sleepy Eye, and New Ulm, MN. Current position and altitude were just a couple of the items provided in their packet data.



The image below was taken with the internet connection on briefly. Looking at the Last Heard window you can observe weather data reports from N0HOT in Houston, MN with a time stamp of 2/23/2021 at around 8:49 PM.



It is also possible to have conversations with fellow hams similar to the text feature on your mobile phone. In the Last Heard window in the picture below, you can see my text asking W9GM at 12:32 PM ...”when do the Packers play?” When you install the software, messages to other hams will not be sent until you enter an APRSISCE/32 passcode under the APRS-IS tab in the Options menu. To get my passcode I sent an email to KJ4ERJ@ARRL.NET, stating my name, call sign and my request for a passcode. I was fortunate to get in less than 24 hours.



✗ PinPoint APRS allows one to import GPX files like those generated on my Garmin GPS. These files allow one to overlay “Waypoints” into the PinPoint APRS map. Routes and areas of operation can be mapped out and displayed on your computer screen. Features like this make PinPoint APRS a useful tool in coordinating and tracking hams equipped with APRS capable radios in Search & Rescue and parade route events. An Event Net Controller can monitor each ham’s location and use this information to determine who the closest available ham is to any particular incident that may arise during an event. This helps save time and resources available to the event team.

While this doesn’t cover every aspect of the PinPoint APRS software, I hope I have given you some insight on the uses and possibilities of the software and APRS in general. I will be the first to admit, I am not the most tech savvy of a ham. It took me a while to get PinPoint APRS to work for me strictly using RF data from my

radio. It wasn’t until I contacted the author of the software and got some general direction on how to make the program work with my radio setup, that I was able to have success in getting and sending APRS packet bursts. It was frustrating for me at first, but the struggle to get it to work was part of the overall fun.

73, KD9KGQ



RIVERLAND AMATEUR RADIO CLUB

Monday, February 15, 2021 Board Meeting Minutes



Meeting was called to order at 6:41 PM via Zoom after a few minutes of adjustments to the system. Ham Prayer was recited.

Members Present; Rick KD9GVS, David KB9EWG, Drew AB9NE, Ron KD9OHQ, Shawn KD9KQG, Carl KC9HDS, Steve W9DXE. Guests present; Dan AB9TS, Kelley KD9LQW, Art W0JDC, and Rich W9TIT. If I missed any I apologize.

Approval of Jan. 2021 minutes: Minutes were approved for January Meeting with no changes.

Treasurer's Report: Drew gave the treasurers report, not much change from prior month. Deposits for 2021 dues will be reflected in March report. President Rick KD9GVS is now a signatory to the account along with Drew.

Officer's Reports: None

Old Business: Newsletter Articles – for The Key: Please have any articles you wish to submit in to kelleyLL23@hotmail.com by the 26th of the month.

Member list e-mail “reflector” up and running: All members are now on the group emails that are being sent out, if anyone is not getting the emails or wants to be added to the list let us know.

Status of “suggestion box” idea: Kelley is working on a survey type form that can be used to get member feedback, it will be coming soon.

Saturday AM rag chew gaining momentum: Remember to tune in to the 146.970 repeater at 8:00 am Saturday Mornings to share in the Ham Breakfast Ragchew. It's starting to get some traction.

Committee Reports

Repeater issues – working good lately – Carl's e-mail regarding repeater troubleshooting very enlightening: Discussion seemed to center around weather conditions being a contributor to the scratchiness and overall, it is performing. No consensus on doing anything else currently.

New Business: Program List update: There are programs being considered and booked for the upcoming General Membership Meeting through June

Club Picnic: Carl will contact the City of Onalaska to get a shelter house reserved for June 12th.

Swap Fest Planning: Carl KC9HDS is going to work with the Legion to see if the August 7th date is available. Carl will contact Greg Miller for assistance with the event.

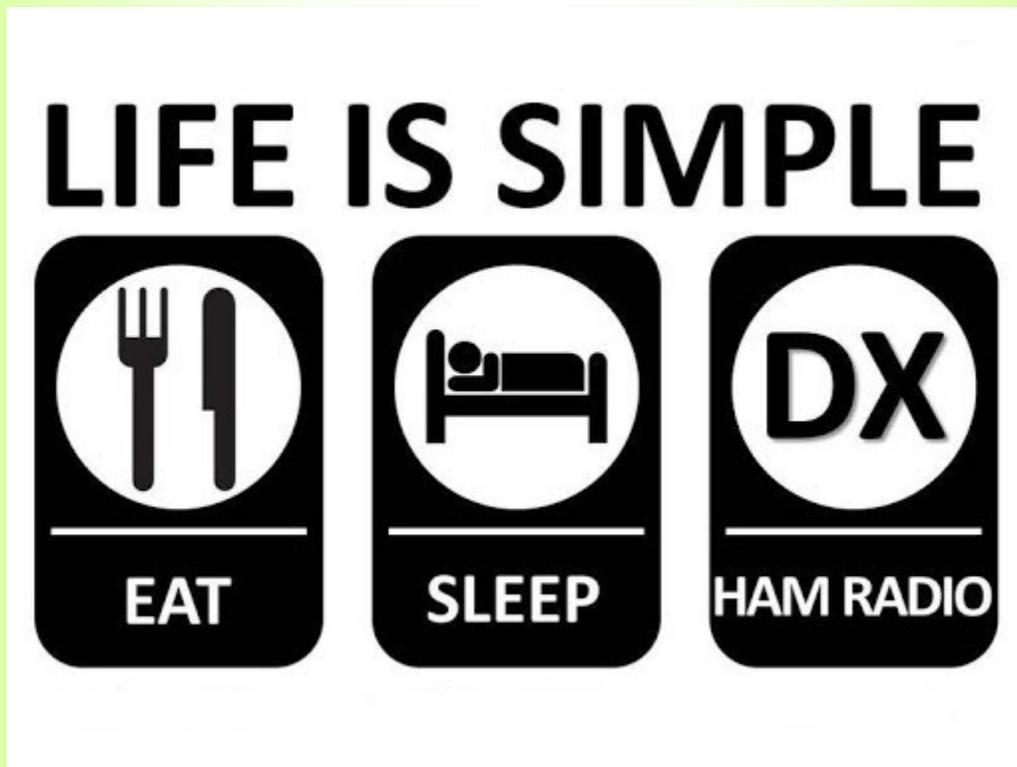
Field Day Planning June: Going to discuss this at the event gets closer.

Club activity suggestion: It was brought up to create some interest in using radio more to have awards for confirmed contacts with 20 (?) other club members via radio using HF, 2m/440 repeaters, or simplex. Anyone interested in this type of activity should let the Board know

St Pat's Day Parade is planned for March 13th: We need 13 volunteers, if you want to get involved let Shawn KD9KQG or Rick KD9GVS know they are taking names for this event.

Motion to Adjourn @ 7:41

* *Anyone who is a member of the Club are welcome to attend the RARC Board meetings.*



UPCOMING Events for March 2021

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

March 7, 2021	Carl kc9hds
March 14, 2021	Rick kd9gvs
March 21, 2021	David kd9epn
March 28, 2021	Shawn kd9kgq

- ◆ Saturday morning Ragchew, weekly on the 146.970 repeater, 08:00-09:00 AM.
- ◆ March 2...Program Night, Time: 07:00 PM, <https://zoom.us/j/99796168272>
- ◆ March 13...La Crosse St. Patricks Day parade, Time: 11:00-01:00 PM. Contact Rick or Shawn if you want to volunteer.
- ◆ March 15...Trustee Meeting, Time: 06:30 PM, <https://zoom.us/j/92299993942>

A Time of Wonderment...

As winter draws on, and I'm immobilized by the weather and my own condition, I often find myself musing about things in my distant past. Of the early 1950's when those simpler times were hallmarked by movies where the good guys always wore white hats and the bad guys wore black ones. When there was the inevitable shoot out, and the good guy always managed to shoot the bad guy's gun from his hand without seriously wounding him, and a fistfight then ensued where the good guy seldom lost his hat and if he did, he never got his hair messed up. And of course, the good guy always won and was last seen riding into the sunset with his girl. It was a time when the everyday things fascinated me. This was a time before TV so our great technological diversion of those days was the radio, AM broadcast radio mostly.

The first radio that I can recall resided in my Aunt and Uncle's living room. It was a floor model 1939 Wards Airline Super Heterodyne. Like many of the more expensive radios of the day, it had multi bands, a huge speaker and best of all, a tuning eye. This last feature could mesmerize you, especially if you were young and impressionable as I was. The tuning eye was an early CRT tube that glowed green and as you tuned in a station, its two vertical halves would move back and forth as the radio was tuned until those two halves would nearly come together to indicate that the desired station was tuned in as good as it could be.

In addition to that feature, the multiband function which included Short Wave, Middle Wave and Broad Cast, would play an even greater role in my wonderment in years to come, but for now, the Broad Cast (AM) band was my magic carpet. On rare occasions when I visited Aunt Dolly and Uncle Bill, I would inevitably find myself seated, cross legged on the rag rug in front of the radio, with a small tin pie pan filled with Spanish peanuts that my Uncle Bill got for me from the Willow Inn next door and my very own bottle of 7up. When Fibber McGee and Molly came on the radio, there was nothing on earth better.

As time past, my Aunt and Uncle decided to move to California, so they put most of their belongings in storage at our house. They sold or gave away the rest. One of the things that they gave away was that Wards Airline Radio...they gave it to me! To say that I was delighted is an understatement. It was like winning the lottery, only better, this radio was my gateway to the world. Even though I was only 6 at the time I felt like I was very fortunate to have such a valuable gift.

At this point, I became curious about the other bands on this radio. I still listened to my favorite shows on the Broad Cast band, but this was the era when TV was coming into play and fewer and fewer of my favorite radio programs continued to be on the air, but when I turned the band selector and began receiving some of those shows from the Armed Forces Radio, the BBC World Service, and other European stations, I was hooked. The only problem was that you couldn't always tune those stations in and they seemed to move around the dial, unlike AM Broad Cast. Before long I realized that if I added a ground wire and a simple antenna to this radio, the reception was greatly improved.

As the years rolled by, and radio technology improved, my old radio fell victim to the ravages of time. It gradually "forgot the words and could only hum along..." After a short period of experimentation with crystal sets, I couldn't afford a new radio, as the new 2 transistor radios were well beyond what my 25 cent a week allowance could afford. I was at a loss and Shortwave fell by the wayside. Then, one Christmas, my brother and I received a pair of "Western Union" telegraph keys which we set up so that one would be in each of our rooms with wires strung in between. At first this was a novel thing, but it soon became too difficult for us to use for communications, as neither of us were able to master the needed Morse code. I had thought about getting involved with Amateur Radio, but my lack of Morse code ability and other factors made that too difficult. The new media of Television was here and thoughts of the wonderment of radio grew less and less wonderful.

After many years of being doused with the hypnotic blue white rays of the big CRT tube, there came a time once more when radio regained its wonderment for me. It came after I was married with children of my own at the dawn of the personal computer that radio again played a major roll in my life. I began to realize that the new technology of computers was a new wonderment, but along with television, this technology had the potential to destroy imagination and wonderment, like television and radio before it, this technology has attracted so many people that whether it is good or not is becoming irrelevant.

As computers, more and more influenced everyone around me including myself, a funny thing happened. I became conscious of a void within me, a void that the computers couldn't fill. Now don't get me wrong, I owe a lot to computers, after all they are my bread and butter so to speak, but I felt a need for something more. What was it? What was missing in spite of all of the wonderful things that could be done with a computer was the deep down lack of the wonderment of it all. Oh sure, there are plenty of things about computers that are or could be deeply interesting, but the simple, basic, naïve joy that the wonderment of radio brings, is just not there.

.....de Carl KC9HDS



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. Contribution articles should be submitted NLT the 26th of the month.
Address any correspondence or anything that should be included in the newsletter to: Kelley Becker at KelleyLL23@hotmail.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 La Cresent, 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 La Crosse.
- * Weekly "Breakfast Club" Ragchew on the 146.970 repeater on Saturday's from 8:00 AM to 9:00 AM. Stop by to say "hi".

Below are listed your RARC 2021 Board of Trustees and contact information.

President.....Rick Kolter, KD9GVS Email...rckolter@gmail.com

Vice-President.....David Peters, KB9EWG Email...kb9ewg@gmail.com

Secretary.....Ron Severson, KD9OHQ Email...ronaldhseverson54@gmail.com

Treasurer.....Drew Neve, AB9NE Email...ab9ne@yahoo.com

Trustee.....Carl Thurston, KC9HDS Email...kc9hds@gmail.com

Trustee.....Steve Becker, W9DXE Email...sbecker54656@yahoo.com

Repeater Trustee.....Shawn Hicks, KD9KGQ Email...eistim68@gmail.com

Newsletter Editor.....Kelley Becker, KD9LQW Email...kellyLL23@hotmail.com

ST PATRICK'S DAY PARADE

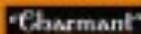
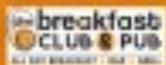
Rain
Shine
or Snow!

SAT, MARCH 13TH, 2021
DOWNTOWN LACROSSE



PARADE STARTS AT NOON
ON 2ND & STATE TRAVELING UP
MAIN STREET TO 9TH

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TURTLE BREWERY

Mark your
calendars for the
16th Annual

Irishfest
LA CROSSE

August 13-15, 2021

The Hunger Task Force will be accepting monetary
donations, and can be made
through their website - lacrossehtf.org