

# T H E K E Y

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. Sun days on the 146.970 repeater.



## Programs

"Digital modes," 7 p.m. Tuesday, May 6.



## 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 at Gundersen Clinic.



Riverland Amateur Radio Club member Kevin Holcomb, KC9ZGD, was net control for communications at the La Crosse MS Walk April 26.

## A fine day for a walk

By Carl Thurston, KC9HDS

This year's MS Walk, April 26, was an immense success. Not only were there more participants than usual but the weather was the best that its been for this annual event in at least five years. Usually one can count on this event to be an endurance event when it comes to weather; it either rains, snows, blows or a combination of all three. This year it was a bit nippy, 45 to 50 degrees F, or there about, but since everyone was well dressed, there were few complaints about the conditions.

There were a lot of teams representing various businesses and organizations. There were a few who have MS that joined in. There were whole families, including family pets that came and walked. As usual, the atmosphere at the La Crosse Center was charged with energy and excitement. There were photo ops with various local celebrities, several TV crews were on hand to interview the event organizers and the volunteer staff as well as key participants. There were drawings for

door prizes, lots of donated treats to be had both before and after the event.

Traditionally the Riverland Amateur Radio Club was there to offer any aid needed during the course of the event, with radio operators located at various points along the course, should anyone need emergency assistance and to keep the event organizers updated as to the progress of the people walking in the event. This is always a good thing to do as it both assists those in need in real time, but it also give the radio operators an opportunity to hone their communication skills. In past years we have depended on the stalwart net control services of Tom O'Brien, WB9BJQ, to relay the information from post to post and to the event organizers. This year was different; O'Brien took an advisory role and helped Kevin Holcomb, KC9ZGD, as he assumed the net control duties. O'Brien taught him well as Holcomb did a superlative job relaying information and keeping everything simple,

See "Walk," page 3

# PICNIC

Mark your calendar for the club picnic, Tuesday, July 1. It will be at Shelter 4 in Veteran's Memorial Park, West Salem. Plans are for the picnic to run from 3:30 p.m. - 11 p.m. Event Chair Bill Wood, KE9XQ, notes the location is good to fly quad and hex copters.

**Calendar**

**Saturday-Sunday, May 3-4**

→ Ten Ten Spring CW Contest CW,

→ QRP To The Field CW

→ 7th Area QSO Party Phone, CW, Digital,

→ Indiana QSO Party Phone, CW

→ New England QSO Party Phone,CW,Digital

**Saturday, May 3**

→ VE Testing, 9 a.m., American Red Cross office, La Crosse.

**Thursday, May 15,**

→ SIMCOM in Oshkosh

**Friday-Sunday, May 16-18**

→ Dayton Hamvention 2014

**Sunday, June 1**

→ Wisconsin Antique Radio Club, 8 to 11 a.m., free at The Terminal, 5917 S. Howell Ave., Milwaukee.



**President's Frequency Modulation**

By Greg Miller, KA9FOZ

What did you do with Amateur Radio over the last month?

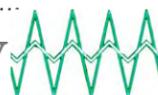
It has been an active one for me. A swap fest, a few HF contacts, some changes to my shack and a new radio purchase for my truck. I also ordered the Kenwood TM 281 2 meter transceiver that we will give away as the main door prize at our swap fest in August. When it arrived I checked it out and that's when the bug bit me, so I installed it in my truck and ordered another one for the swap fest. New is nice and what my wife does not know won't hurt her. Just kidding, after all she knows when something changes in my truck. I got it all set up and working great when my truck decided it has other issues. Now I have another truck that I have to move the new radio to, but that's okay because I like doing that type of work.

At the Stoughton swap fest I bought three vertical antennas for 20, 40 and 80 meters. These will be used on my camper; I look forward to installing them and tuning them up.

The MS Walk was held April 26 and I must say Kevin Holcomb, KC9ZGD, did a very good job organizing the crew and serving as net control. Tom O'Brien, WB9BJQ, must be training him well. It is good to see the younger Hams coming forward to take over some of the club's responsibilities.

Testing is Saturday, May 3, and we wish all who are testing good luck. Also that day the club will be helping out supplying communications for the Festival Foods Half Marathon.

See you at the meeting 7 p.m., Tuesday, May 6.



The RARC Field Day operation will again be held at Greg Miller's, KA9FOZ, QTH June 28-29. Dan Abts, AB9TS, is chair.

**Riverland Amateur Radio Club**

P.O. Box 621  
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President ..... Greg Miller, KA9FOZ  
Vice president..... Van Elston, WA9FIO  
Treasurer..... Tom O'Brien, WB9BJQ  
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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 Riverland Amateur Radio Club's

# Swap Fest

8 a.m. - 1 p.m. Saturday August 9

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**

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

Door prizes

Omni Center, 255 Riders Club Rd., Onalaska, WI 54650  
Refer questions to Greg Miller, KA9FOZ, 608-792-7841, [gmliller@centurytel.net](mailto:gmliller@centurytel.net)

**Walk, continued from page 1**



Riverland Amateur Radio Club operators who provided communications for the La Crosse MS Walk April 26 included: (L-R) Tom O'Brien, WB9BJQ, Bob Seaquist, KC9IWE, Dave Peters, KB9EWG, Carl Thurston, KC9HDS, Dan, a "pre-ham," Greg Miller, KA9FOZ, Roger Reader, KA9BKK, and Kevin Holcomb, KC9ZGD.

neat and safe for everyone.

The event itself went without a single incident, fortunately. In years past there have been minor cases of fatigue, muscle spasms, and minor cuts and bruises, but not this year. Everything went the way that it was supposed to and a good time was had by all.

After the MS Walk, as we all returned to the La Crosse Center to exchange impressions of the day, have a nice convivial lunch, have more pictures taken, and the collection of the prizes won by those fortunate enough to have had their numbers drawn for one of the door prizes. As Bob Wilson, N9LZK, worked to pack up the radio base station, Bob Seaquist, KC9IWE, took photos of the proceedings and added his own, often pithy, observations about the day's event. The other RARC operators included: Greg Miller, KA9FOZ, Roger Reader, KA9BKK, Dave Peters, KB9EWG, Seaquist, Dan a new member who is working on his Tech license and myself.

Events like this are great opportunities for Hams to use and perfect their radio skills and to offer assistance to those in need of communications for large participation gatherings like this. It is also a good opportunity to show to the community at large that Amateur Radio is a viable way to relay information; quickly, efficiently, and accurately.

The next time that we are involved with an event like this, it would be good for even more operators to partake in the event and help with this service. We are a Special Service Club and to keep that designation, we should all be more active in service events like this.



Bob Wilson, N9LZK, sets up the antenna for the event in his truck.

**Centennial chase is on**

By Bob Seaquist, KC9IWE

The chase is on and it is not too late for you to sprint toward lots of contacts in the ARRL Centennial QSO Party. The principal "rabbit" to chase is the league's W1AW/\* which will be on the air from every state and most territories at least twice during the year. That makes it easy to work WAS working only



W1AW portable operations. This is the first ARRL-sponsored operating event where every member is worth at least one point, so work as many points as you can during 2014!

In February I had the honor of operating W1AW/o in Minnesota with members of the Winona Amateur Radio Club. Conditions were not very good but we were busy nonetheless fielding calls from all over. That was before the event took off. "It is 300 percent bigger than we ever anticipated," said Central Division Director George Isely, W9GIG.

A couple weeks ago there were unimaginable pile ups for both states running. Most have had to run split operations just like rare DX entities. It was awesome to hear and extremely frustrating trying to contact them over screaming clowns running California kilowatts.

Each week two states have W1AW/portable stations. I've missed two, Minnesota because I was on the delivery end, and North Dakota because there are only three Hams there and they seem to be running QRP at short, random times. I missed Guam, too, pretty much for the same reason I missed North Dakota. I have another crack at them later this year and I'll be in there trying.

The centennial QSO Party awards points as well. Operators like ARRL President Kay Craigie, N3KN, is worth 300 points, and other league functionaries lesser amounts. See the points table at [www.arrl.org/centennial\\_qso\\_party#Table](http://www.arrl.org/centennial_qso_party#Table)

The "portable" stations usually are spotted on DXSummit.org and occasionally so are some of the league operators who are worth more points than you or I.

You may learn how you're doing if you use Log book of the World LoTW both in individual points and overall standing.

# A Springtime Pilgrimage

By Carl Thurston, KC9HDS

It is finally Spring and it seems that many Hams are drawn to Hamfests. This was the case with the attendance at the annual Hamfest at Stoughton. For those of you who have yet to attend this annual event; it is a medium sized event, held in a ice hockey arena. There are a fair number of vendors there and a lot of private individuals with items for sale. An ARRL representative was there and VE testing was available through out the day. This is a well organized meet that includes beverages, other refreshments, and several door prizes that are raffled off in drawings that take place from time to time all day long. These are the things to be expected when going to this event.

As is often the case when the Hapless Ham is involved, it almost didn't happen. Oh no, not that the event almost didn't happen; the Hapless Ham and various other members of RARC almost didn't go. As the date of this event drew near, there was a feverish flurry of activity, as the various Hams who wanted to go made their arrangements that would enable them to go. First there was the determination of who would drive. Since there weren't any Hams available who had a larger vehicle that could accommodate more than four people, a lot of shuffling around took place to see who would be going with who and when they were going to depart. As the date drew closer, some Hams expressed the desire to go and others decided not to, more shuffling took place. Individual schedules came into play and the result was there were

seven Hams from the RARC who where going to go: one was already down there visiting his son, two were going to take highway 14, two were going to make a leisurely and brief day of it, and two more who went by I 90 and toured some back roads on the way in.

Anyway, once at the event, the various RARC Hams wandered through the arena, meeting with old friends, making new ones and kibitzing about the items seen, both purchased and not. Some go to these events to see how little they can spend, some go with no intentions of buying anything, but some, like the Hapless Ham, always buy more than they intended to and come away with a ton of items that they often times didn't even knew existed prior to seeing them at the event. To be fair, one of the reasons that this happens is because there are so many things available there that one usually does not find at the neighborhood store. Then too, this presents an opportunity look over so many different things that aren't amateur radio related, including a wide variety of computer components, electronic devices, and small hand tools. It's kind of like a giant flea market devoted to buy items.

This is not to say that there weren't any women present, there were a few, mostly spouses, perhaps there to be sure that their husbands didn't sell the farm to buy that outrageously expensive HF transceiver that only Bill Gates would normally afford. Perhaps that's a bit unfair. After all, there are women

Hams. I've been told that the number of women Hams is increasing every year, and the increasing number of women at



these events does tend to support that assumption. None of the local Hams came with their spouses, but that too many change in time, as one of the newer Hams wanted to bring his wife along, but was discouraged from doing so, at least this time. There was one woman Ham from our club who wanted to come along, was invited to do so, but had a conflict that kept her from joining us, perhaps she'll be able to make it next year.

Thankfully the Gremlins that usually haunt anything that the Hapless Ham tries to do were absent this time. Or maybe they were there after all, since the list of strange but useful items purchased by the Hapless Ham's long and totally unexpected. Lets just hope that these will prove to be not only useful but necessary to the future success of his endeavors. Only time will tell. To those who didn't make it to this years' event, I can only say, as I have often said in the past, that you missed a very good memorable event and you will never know what you missed by not being there. Be there next year.