

# THE KEY

Official Journal of The Riverland Amateur Radio Club



The Riverland Amateur Radio Club is a Special Service Club affiliated with the American Radio Relay League. The club is active in community service as well as actively promoting Amateur Radio in the Coulee Region. The Club is open to all who are interested in Amateur Radio and will help unlicensed persons become licenses thru the FCC.

## Weather Ready Nation

by Kevin Holcomb KC9ZGD

**Riverland Amateur Radio Club**  
P.O. Box 621  
Onalaska, WI.  
54636

**Repeater**  
146.970 PL 131.8

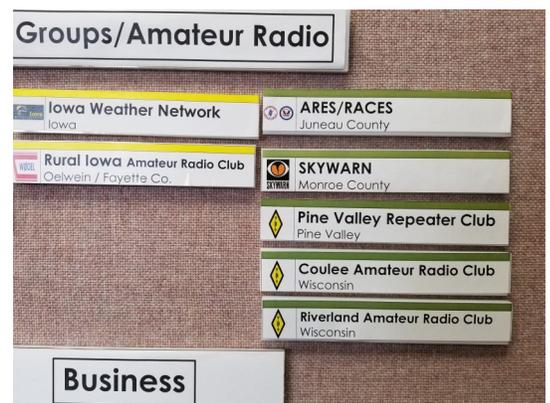
**RARC Net**  
8:00 PM Sunday  
night on the  
146.970 Repeater

**Club Meetings**  
Trustee Meeting  
3rd Monday of the  
month at King  
Street Kitchen at  
5:00 PM, all club  
members are  
welcome.

**Program evening is**  
1st Tuesday of the  
month at 7:00 PM,  
Gunderson Clinic  
conference room 1  
in the lower level.

Just in time for the summer storm season, if old man winter will ever let go. The Riverland Amateur Radio Club has become an ambassador of Weather Ready Nation. There is irony about how the club became involved in the first place. It was while some club members, including myself who were attending the skywarn appreciation day at the Lacrosse National Weather Service last December that I noticed a large board in the lobby with Weather Ready Nation. I noticed every entity that was listed on the board/map including city, county, and state government, media, schools, businesses, amateur radio, and spotter groups. RARC was not on the list. So I asked and was told that we had to apply, so Vice President Dan Abts, AB9TS got on a computer right there and signed us up. So now we are on the board/map.

So what is an ambassador of the Weather Ready Nation? Well, as a WRN Ambassador, partners commit to working with NOAA and other Ambassadors to strengthen national resilience against extreme weather. Weather Ready Nation (WRN) is a strategic outcome where society's response should be equal to the risk from all extreme weather, water, and climate hazards. So when we get some good storms this summer, just know that we are not doing this alone, but we are a part of a much bigger picture.



Endeavor to persevere, have you ever heard that phrase before? I have, it was a line stated by Lone Watie in the Clint Eastwood movie, Outlaw Josie Wales. The aged Indian Chief was telling Jose Wales when he had first heard those words that describes what the tribe must do to pursue their goals. So it took the endeavor to preserver to accomplish them.

I think of that phrase in the context of Amateur Radio as we all when we went after our ham ticket had that endeavor to persevere. We had a goal that we pushed for until we got it, after all we couldn't just go down to the local Sprint or Verizon store and sign a contract and walk out with our ticket that gave us the communications tools. When we wanted to e-mail someone we pursued our ham license and worked on learning RTTY or Packet Radio. Or instead of Skype we learned slow scan TV. I would say there was plenty of the Endeavor to Persevere when we were all starting out just as there is today for the newly licensed ham. So to all the new hams and old one, continue to Endeavor to Persevere in the hobby. Even I have only scratched the surface of all that can be done with Amateur Radio.



**Riverland Amateur Radio Club**  
**PO Box 621**  
**Onalaska, WI 54650**

President.....Kevin Holcomb, KC9ZGD  
Vice-President.....Dan Abts, AB9TS  
Secretary.....Rick Kolter, KD9GVS  
Treasurer.....Greg Miller, K9LEC  
Trustee.....Carl Thurston, KC9HDS  
Trustee.....Roger Reader, KA9BKK  
Trustee.....Bill Wood, KE9XQ  
Newsletter Editor.....Greg Miller, K9LEC

The Key is published monthly and e-mailed to members and friends of the Riverland Amateur Radio Club. Address any correspondence to: Greg Miller at k9lec@arrl.net.

Visit our website at rarc.qth.com

Testing for new Ham's or upgrades for 2017 will be on the following dates:

- April 28
- June 2
- August 4 (RARC Swapfest)
- November 10

Register 5 days in advance with Roger Reader, KA9BKK, 608-783-0723 or readers@centurtytel.net.



It was a Happy Birthday for Van Elston, wa9fio as Carl, kc9hds, Roger, ka9bkk and Tom, wb9bjq surprised him with a birthday cake for his 80th birthday at there regular monthly dinner at Dru-gan's Supper Club. I wonder if they sang Happy Birthday to him in front of the whole restaurant!

HAPPY BIRTHDAY VAN!!



# Stoughton Swap Fest Report...by Carl Thurston KC9HDS

It was a fine day to travel to Stoughton for the Madison Area Swap Fest. The sky was a bit overcast, but that was OK since we were traveling East and if it weren't overcast, the sun would have been in our eyes. Traveling with me were the usual crew: Arthur W0JDC, Bill KE9XQ, and Tom WB9BJQ. They all agreed to come along in spite of the fact that I usually get lost at least once en route.

All went well, the traffic was light for a Saturday and we made it to Stoughton without mishap. As we often do, we made a pit stop at McDonald's in Mauston for a quick breakfast before pressing on to Stoughton. At least not until we got into Stoughton proper. Going down Main street, we were all admiring the fine old brick buildings and so we knew that we would have to turn left to get to the arena where the swap meet was to take place, but somehow we managed to turn left a couple of blocks too soon and wound up in a blocked off street, so we had to back track to get to the right one. Upon arrival at the parking lot, around 0830, we were faced with the problem of finding a place to park as nearly every possible spot was already taken. There was one next to a dumpster, that was still available so that's where we left my Explorer. Since there was so little parking left near the arena, we assumed that there must be an equally large number of vendors and shoppers in there, but surprisingly the number of vendors and Hams shopping were fairly moderate. In fact it was about half the size of last year's event.

Oh yes, there were some of the regulars there, well at least Tower Antennas was there and there was the ever present tables full of surplus stuff from the Madison area tech schools and from the University of Wisconsin at Madison, and some of the connector guys were there with their wares as well. The number of people selling computer related hardware and software were diminished some what, but there was still a good selection of that stuff too. There were sellers with antennas, vacuum tubes, electronic manuals, and other assorted items of interest to Hams. There was a couple of vendors of things to eat and drink and of course there were the usual door4 prizes, but those too had diminished in number and relative value.

Once having paid our entrance fees, we all went in various directions about the arena. Arthur said that there wasn't anything in particular that he wanted or needed and that he only came along for the ride and the companionship, Tom was looking for some connectors, Bill was geared up to try to fill the back of my Explorer but alas, he only bought a few things that could have easily been carried in the back seat between Arthur and Tom. I bought an extra tube for my Linear amplifier, an Army flash light, and a Swiss Army knife. I had been looking forward to Bill loading up so I had cleared out the back of my Explorer so that he would have room for his treasures, but that proved unnecessary.

By about 1030 we had all made our way around the arena several times, met and talked with several old and new friends, including Rick KD9GVS and Dan AB9TS from our club, so we decided to head for home. We usually go home via 51 and 12, which takes us by Delany's salvage store. A stop that is usually just as interesting as the swap meet. This time was no exception. Arthur bought an electric space heater, Bill bought a battery float charger, Tom just enjoyed looking at all of the odd things there, and I picked up some sticky pads to hold iPhones on the car's dash.

After visiting the restroom there, we headed out for I 90 and home, stopping in Onalaska for gas before going back to my house where Arthur and Bill's car were parked. Once the few things that we brought back were transferred to Bill and Arthur's cars, and everyone agreed that it was a good time, we said our good byes and Arthur, with Tom in tow and Bill went home, somewhat lighter in purchases than in the past, but content that the day was well spent.



# As Necessary as Air... ■■ by Carl Thurston, kc9hds

Last Monday night, the annual Storm Spotter training session was held at the Mary Crest Auditorium in Franciscan Mayo Health Center. Having attended this kind of event several times, I wasn't expecting much more than a refresher course on this subject, but I was surprised when Todd Shea did a number of updates that made the whole event much more significant than those in the past.

To begin with, those in attendance was different than what usually takes place here. First of all the people that came were a bit different than usual. Usually there are a group of members of the Law Enforcement Community as well as members of the various Community Fire Fighters present. This was not evident this year. Those in attendance were from the general public, mostly people with no previous experience with Storm Spotter training, plus a few members of a local Amateur Radio Club.

These are the normal people that one would expect to see there. In addition to them, there was also a few of the professionals that deal with the weather and the dissemination of weather related information as seen and heard on Commercial Radio and TV news programs. In particular, among others, Dan Breeden Chief Meteorologist of WXOW Channel 19 was there. That wasn't too surprising, and other than the fine presentation by Todd Shea from the National Weather Service. Things went pretty much as expected.

The exception that happened at this session was the fact that integral to the usual information about how to identify cloud formations and their significance when trying to predict how weather patterns result in potentially dangerous weather events, there was a description of how Amateur Radio Operators are the main source of accurate weather related information that the National Weather Service uses to determine the severity of weather systems that move through our area. He further emphasized the willingness and devotion exhibited by the Amateur Radio Operators when it was time to do Storm Spotting for the NWS. It was gratifying to hear this but he went on to point out that there were several Amateur Radio Operators present and that if anyone wanted to get more information about how to become an licensed Amateur Radio Operator they should ask any of them present about how they could become one.

Not expecting anything like this to take place, most of the Amateur Radio Operators there were not prepared to do more than to pass on information about when and where they learn more about the requirements for obtaining an Amateur Radio license. Most of the Hams there were kind of caught off guard as there was no indication prior to this session that there might be an opportunity to help those wanting to become Hams. That is, most of the Hams were unprepared, that is all except for Dave KB9EWG and Larry KC9HDP. They came equipped with pamphlets and other publications from ARRL that they were able to give to those individuals who were interested in becoming Hams to become better Storm Spotters. To say that this was a surprise to the rest of us there is to say the least. Dave and Larry did a fine job of making a connection to those people. Whether anything good comes out of that is anyone's guess, but at least they were there to step in and help out.

It should be a lesson to us all to be constantly prepared to put forward information about Amateur Radio to anyone, anywhere, at any time. We all talk about the need to get more people involved in Amateur Radio. There is always those who feel that they are trying their best to further the hobby, but are they really? It is sort of humbling to see when there are Hams that are putting into practice what we all talk about. Dave and Larry are an example to us all. We should all be ready to answer those questions when ever anyone asks "How do I become a Ham?"



# Walking the Walk, not always so easy... by Carl Thurston, kc9hds

This year's MS Walk started out in an ominous way. To begin with, it wasn't being held in the usual place ;ie; The South Hall of The La Crosse Center, but rather the North hall of it. To say that this caused some confusion is to put it mildly. Being disoriented by this change of the previously established norm was just the beginning of a most unusual day. Don't get me wrong, it was a bright and sunny day, which was sort of unusual for this event that has been plagued with cold and rain most of the time. Once it was clear where we were supposed to be, things continued to spiral down up to the beginning of the walk itself.

Oh yes, we were all there, but not all of our equipment was present. The club radio, known as the "milk crate radio," because of it being installed in a milk crate along with it's power supply, was there, but the antenna that we had used in the past was not. Under most conditions, this wouldn't have mattered much, an antenna could be attached to it by a short piece of coax, but in order to be effective at the La Crosse Center, the antenna needs to be outside of the building, as the metal of the building's structure makes it nearly impossible for a clear, consistent signal to get in or out of there. Casting about for the needed parts of an antenna system, it was discovered that we had an antenna on a car that would work, but we needed about 50 feet of coax to connect it to the radio. This is where things went from bad to worse. Bob, W9LSE volunteered to run home and get the needed coax, so off he went. Moments later, a Staff member from the Center came to us as we were gathered around the table that our radio was set up on, and told us that some one named Bob had fallen down on the side walk and that he couldn't get up. This caused concern among us, so Kevin KC9ZGD went to investigate. He soon found that Bob W9LSE, had indeed fallen down while running to his truck, and further more he had broken his hip in the fall. Bob, ever resourceful had already called for medical help by the time that Kevin found him. It was assumed that he had indeed broken his hip as he could not move without causing extreme pain in his hip. The EMTs who arrived with an ambulance immediately took Bob to the hospital.

Back in the Center, an alternate means was found of mounting an antenna on a metal utility box near our radio so that our Net Control Station could function. With only a few more minor problems, the event went off like clock work with the MS Walk participants able to start normally, our club marshaled the walk with no further incidents. The day ended with lunch and so many left over food items that many of those present took sandwiches, cookies, donuts, an fruit home with them.

It would have been a nearly perfect event, had Bob not fallen and broken his hip. We all felt badly about what happened to Bob, and I'm sure that he isn't happy about his condition either. He has all of our best wishes for a speedy recovery. His efforts went in vain to retrieve a coax cable because of the resulting accident, but his determination to help out the event has not gone unnoticed. Ever eager to help where he can, Bob tried his best to make this event work, too bad that it ended this way for him.



## Announcements

May 1...Program night, Carl Thurston and his train wreck experience.

May 6...Sunday Night net on the 146.97 repeater at 8:00 PM. Net control is Car, kc9hds.

May 13...Sunday Night net on the 146.97 repeater at 8:00 PM. Net control is Rick, kd9gvs.

May 20...Sunday Night net on the 146.97 repeater at 8:00 PM. Net control is Kevin, kd9zgd.

April 21, 2018...Trustee Meeting at King Street Kitchen, club members are welcome.

April 22...Sunday Night net on the 146.97 repeater at 8:00 PM. Net control is Mark, kb9ofk.

May 27...Sunday Night net on the 146.97 repeater at 8:00 PM. Net Control is David, kd9epn.

June 5...Program Night Bill, ke9xq Raspberry PI and/or Arduino presentation.

# RIVERLAND AMATEUR RADIO CLUB

**Monday April 16<sup>th</sup>, 2018 Executive Meeting**

## MINUTES

**Call to order:** 1705 hrs

**Members Present :** Kevin Holcomb KC9ZGD, Greg Miller K9LEC, Roger Reader KA9BKK, Dan Abts AB9TS, Carl Thurston KC9HDS, Rick Kolter KD9GVS

**Approval of Minutes:** March meeting minutes approved without comment.

**Treasurer's Report:** Greg, K9LEC, financial report available upon request.

## **Committee Reports:**

**2018 Field Day:** Bill KE9XQ, will contact Jostad's re. our use of the location once again  
Rick will make reservation with Best Kept for portable

**2018 Swapfest:** Greg will confirm reservation at Omni Center, ARRL sanction ready to go.  
Carl & Roger to send out flyers.

## **Old Business:**

Kevin picked up Rotary check at their meeting for Club's participation in Rotary Lights.  
He gave a short presentation on what we do as a club.

**Name Tags:** Kevin asked about a Bainbridge St. vendor to supply these ? According to Greg the existing one he has was ordered from the ARRL back in the 80's.

Our club has been registered as an "Ambassador for a Weather Ready Nation" with the National Weather Service. Thanks Dan, AB9TS !

June 9<sup>th</sup> picnic all set to go at Rowe Park In Onalaska. Thanks to Carl KC9HDS for setting this up !

## **New Business:**

From this point forward, Executive Board meetings will be scheduled every other month, unless a need arises to meet in the interim. In that case, a special meeting can be called.

**Motion to Adjourn :** 1750 hrs.

## **Future Events**

May 5...Festival Foods 1/2 Marathon

June 9...RARC Picnic, Rowe Park Onalaska.

June 23-24...ARRL Field Day

August 4...RARC Swapfest at the Onalaska Omni Center

