

# 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

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## RARC Net

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

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## 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.



A sunny, autumn glow preceded clouds that preceded sprinkles that preceded clouds that came before more glimpses of sun followed by rain, clouds and finally an enormous rainbow closing the fourth successful run of the Trempealeau National Wildlife Refuge Special Event Station K9P Sat. Oct. 19.

## You shudda been at the refuge

By Carl Thurston, KC9HDS

Well another National Wildlife Refuge week at Trempealeau, with its annual Special Event Station K9P, has gone by and if you didn't make it to this event, you shudda been there! It was another event were everything went without a hitch. This, in spite of the fact that it almost didn't happen due to the intransigence of our elected officials in Washington, who at first refused to do their job. At the 11th hour, they finally relented and the government was started up again thus opening the refuge for business. An alternative site was set in case things weren't resolved in DC, but fortunately everything worked out at the Refuge as usual.

Meanwhile, it is good when members of a couple of Ham radio clubs can come together in the spirit of mutual enjoyment. For the

## Operators

Dan Abts, AB9TS; Greg Miller, KA9FOZ; Art Osborn, W0JDC; Bob Seaquist, KC9IWE; Cathy Steinhoff, KC9ZEZ; Lance Tagliapietra, K0JYB; Carl Thurston, KC9HDS; Bill Wood, KE9XQ

past several years the Riverland Amateur Radio Club of La Crosse, and the Winona Amateur Radio Club have joined together to participate in this most enjoyable event. You might remember, last year's event featured a number of Boy Scouts from area troops who came to the refuge to enjoy the scenery and operate on a radio or two.

The weather was not as good as past events, but it was tolerable, the DX was

See "Refuge," page 3



**Christmas Party**  
 Mark your calendars for the Riverland Amateur Radio Club's Christmas Party Tuesday, Jan. 7. It will be at Schmidy's with social hour at 6 p.m. and dinner at 7 p.m.

**Calendar**



**Fri, Sat, Sun, Nov 1, 2, 3**  
 → Remembering the Edmund Fitzgerald Special Event, Split Rock Light House. [www.radiobam.org](http://www.radiobam.org).

**Nov 2-4**  
 → ARRL Nov. Sweepstakes CW

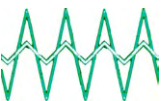
**Tue Nov 5**  
 → Riverland Amateur Radio Club, 7 p.m., Gundersen Lutheran, La Crosse. Elmer session at 6 p.m.

**Sat Nov 9**  
 → RARC VE testing, 9 a.m., American Red Cross, 2927 Losey Blvd. S., La Crosse. Those wishing to test must contact Roger Reader, KA9BKK, 608 783 0723 or [readers@centurytel.net](mailto:readers@centurytel.net), to register five days in advance. No walk-ins.  
 → 10 10 Fall Digital QSO Party, [www.ten ten.org](http://www.ten ten.org)  
 → Kentucky QSO Party, [www.wkdx.com](http://www.wkdx.com)

**Tue Dec 3**  
 → Riverland Amateur Radio Club, 7 p.m., Gundersen Lutheran, La Crosse. Elmer session at 6 p.m.

**Sat Dec 7**  
 → Skywarn Recognition Day, 9 a.m. 4 p.m., National Weather Service, N2788 County Road FA, La Crosse.

**President's Frequency Modulation**



By Greg Miller, KA9FOZ

How active am I as an Amateur Radio operator? I ask myself that question and I have to answer honestly that I am not a very active ham. Why is that? I have an interest in radio but don't seem to get on like I should. I have other Amateur Radio activities that take up a considerable amount of my time, such as president of the club, working with the swap meet and Field Day. But the actual on the air time is limited. I wonder why that is and I am not sure why. I do get on the radio when I do something unusual such as camping. I like making antenna mounts and antennas that I can take to the campground with me. In the camper I have the radios going and I really like checking into the different nets that are out there. When I am home and working around the shop I will have the radio on a HF band and will be listening to a rag chew but seldom check in. I will also have the scanner on 2 meters but not much activity on that. I need to work on improving my on the air activities. So I have a challenge for myself, GET ON THE AIR.

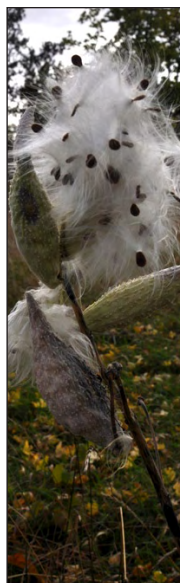
I also want to ask that the club members check into the Sunday night net and see what's new. We are trying to have some lively discussions on what ever subject that may come up. We are also looking for any suggestions on improving the net.

I want to take this opportunity to congratulate Charlie. You ask 'who is Charlie?', just one of the nicest dogs that I have met. He belongs to Carl, or I think Carl belongs to Charlie. Charlie just became the "Dog of the Month" at Pet Me Scratch Me. So congratulations Charlie. You get the couch and Carl is in the dog house.



**Word to the wise**

Catnap while much is made of the 90 minute sleep cycle, a great deal of alertness can be restored by a short bit of shut eye. Or just a walk in the fresh air. Or maybe a shower? Take a break!



**Riverland Amateur Radio Club**  
 P.O. Box 621  
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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)

## Refuge, continued from page 1

okay and the snacks and beverages were ample and tasty. This year's event was a lot like last year's, but without the Boy Scouts. Last year there was a QSO party going on in parts of Europe that made for some nice Dxing in that direction. This year, there was a QSO party going on in New York so there was a lot of activity with that event. There was also some DX to Europe, but no real surprises. As it has been the case since the beginning of this annual event, the RARC communications trailer was brought up to the refuge and Roger Reader's, KA9BKK, Mystery antenna was deployed for use. The trailer was set up with two stations, including the RARC's Kenwood HF rig.

The level of cooperation exhibited at this event has always been of the highest order. Such an event could very easily become extremely competitive, but that seems to have been the last thing on anyone's mind as the bands, equipment, and refreshments were shared to everyone's satisfaction. It was especially good to note the way that the stations within the communications trailer were shared, with no one hogging any of the mics in there.

Beyond the main activity of seeking

QSOs, there was the shared camaraderie. I don't know why it seems so special that such togetherness can spontaneously happen between different individuals. This should be considered the norm between Hams, after all we are all members of a fairly exclusive group. It isn't just anyone who wants to become a Ham, nor is it that many can actually become a Ham. If for no other reason, this should cement relations between the various Hams, but alas it isn't always so. For that reason and for others, it is heart warming when there is this kind of togetherness at an event like this. The Trempealeau National Wildlife Refuge Special Event was founded on brotherhood and cooperation and continues to be so. Even if you have no desire to actively participate by



operating at this event, it is well worth your while to come and share in the good times of it.

I find it hard to understand why more Hams have not come to this event. Yes, it is out of the way, yes, it takes a real commitment to prepare for and attend this event, and yes, the rewards are in some regards considered small; the ultimate satisfaction of just being there and witnessing the joint efforts of the various individuals make the trip more than worth while. It is good to get out there in the wonderfully fresh environment of the refuge and even more exciting to score some nice DX QSOs as well. If this appeals to you and you didn't make it to this event, all that I can say to you is that "you shudda been there!"

## Clean up at the Sweeps

The first and third weekends of November are great opportunities for US Hams to jump in and try the ARRL November Sweepstakes. It is the oldest domestic contest and it has two week ends - the first for Morse (CW) and two weeks later for Phone (SSB). Even modest stations with low antennas can do very well.

The object is to make as many contacts as you can on 160, 80, 40, 20, 15, and 10 meters with the 83 ARRL and RAC Sections. You may contact each station once during the contest. If you work all 83 sections (called a "Clean Sweep") you can get a really nice coffee mug. If you make 100 QSOs, you can get a pin and start a collection!

The ARRL CW Sweepstakes is Nov 2 Nov 3 local time. The Phone Sweepstakes is Nov 16 Nov 17 local time. That's Saturday afternoon through Sunday evening. You can operate for 24 out of the 30 hour contest period.

Contesting isn't like day to day operating. It's like playing a real football game instead of a game of catch. You'll need to use some of those receiver controls and narrower filters.

It's a lot of fun - the hours will fly by. There are complete rules and instructions for operating and scoring and send in the log on the ARRL web site.

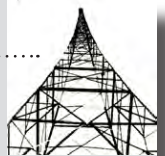


## Net Note

The RARC's Sunday Night Net will have a new sound: mics keying!

Net Control Stations will encourage check ins to weigh in on subjects of interest to Amateur Radio Operators.

The Sunday Night Net is at 8 p.m. on the 146.97 (PL 131.8) repeater. All licensed Amateurs are welcome.



## As ready as can be

By Carl Thurston, KC9HDS

As the time passes, we all tend to assume a certain state of readiness. It is not the same type or form of readiness for all of us, but it is readiness just the same. It could be readiness to deal with domestic issues. It could be readiness to perform your occupational tasks. It could be readiness to ward off illness, fatigue, or minor accidents. It could just be the readiness that comes from the resolve to see the end of things. It could be a lot of things.

As Hams, we like to think of ourselves as being ready for any eventuality, be it catastrophic weather, power outages, or other man made disasters. Usually it is the younger Hams that are more eager for this sort of experience, but not always. Some older Hams like to build up to a fervor gradually over many years. Some tire of the anticipation of pending doom. Some feel after a while that there is no need to prepare for anything, as the local, state, and national authorities have everything under control and that they don't need our help.

It could be that these are some of the reasons why organizations such as ARES/RACES has steadily declined in numbers of members and participants. It could also be that we are falling victim to the "chicken little syndrome," where after repeatedly being subjected to the over exaggerated descriptions of pending calamities by those who seem to be in the know, we become

disillusioned. It could be that we have become lackadaisical about preparing for disasters because there have been so few of them in our immediate area. This could also be true of those who have been ready for "the Big One" for decades only to sit despondently waiting with their gear set to go and with nothing to do. Kind of like being all dressed up with no place to go.

Perhaps we should be emphasizing more involvement in training for such disasters. Perhaps we, as Hams, should devote a portion of our meeting time to readiness drills. Perhaps we should each study techniques and methods of dealing with disasters. This wouldn't have to be a drudgery, it could be set up in such a way as to become an enjoyable activity. Field Day is one example of a potential disaster simulation exercise, SkyWarn Appreciation Day, and even a remotely located Special Event Station can be added to a list of activities that promote readiness and the ability to operate in locations that weren't specifically designed for radio communications.

It is my observation that Hams tend to be fairly independent. I guess that it is part of what it takes to be a Ham in the first place. When one is independent, by definition one needs to be self reliant. By being self reliant, the very skills and talents needed to stand up to disasters when they happen, are nurtured. There are some abilities that are naturally

generated when a Ham shack is designed and set up. In the process a lot of skills are honed and a good

amount of on the air experience helps to complete the picture. Not everyone has the time or the talent to do all of these things to perfection, but with diligence, much can be accomplished over time.

I spent a lot of time mentally going over the things that I have found to be needed to create my own state of readiness. Since the main antennas of my shack were in such need of repair for so long without my finding the where with all to complete the needed repairs I fell back on the portable HF station that I designed and assembled. It wasn't something that came together over night. There was a lot of trial and error involved in the selection of the various components that went into it and even more trial and error in my learning how to make it all work efficiently. Now that my portable HF system is nearly complete, and the main antennas of my shack have been repaired. I think that now I'm as ready as I'll ever be, if those dratted Gremlins would just go away.




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## Why we do what we do

By Dennis Rybiecki, K9LGU/STM-WI

This month we look again at the reason for dozens of things we do in our hobby. So when it comes down to why we practice traffic handling, why we learn to serve as net controls, why we learn about the Incident Command System, why we help in public service events, why we do mentoring, why we study electronics, propagation, and practice operating techniques it's because no drum roll needed it's what we do to help. We offer our services through the hobby, through ARES/RACES, through our associations and other means, because we can assist in preserving the safety and property of folks. We can be ready when called upon.

Sure, it may not be a major event handling a message wishing a happy birthday, helping with a bicycle ride, or watching and reporting on a developing storm but it trains us. Maybe continual practice getting messages exactly right doesn't have immediate payoffs, but when that skill becomes automatic and needs to be applied during an emergency it will be there.

We continue to improve our stations and ourselves, learn to work with each other more efficiently, and continually test our skills and our equipment not just because it's fun (although it really, really is) but also because it's a public service.