

# 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. Sundays on the 146.970 repeater.



## Programs

**Tuesday, Nov. 4,** the program is "miniature tools," 7 p.m.

## 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.



Craig Goldbeck, N9ETD, left, and Cory Lynch, KC9NOJ, set up Jamboree On The Air (JOTA) operations Oct. 18. According to Scouter Nate Balk, KC9ZXX, there was good news and bad news. "We had terrible luck making contacts, not sure if it was our location or band conditions," Balk said, adding, "we ended up having 21 boys operate and they all made at least one contact. We ended up with just over 40 total contacts, which wasn't ideal, but I think all of the boys had fun."



Meteorologist Todd Shea, KB9YXS, warms up for Skywarn Recognition Day. It is tentatively planned for Saturday, Dec. 6, at the La Crosse National Weather Service office, N2788 County Road FA, La Crosse.

## Get the broom

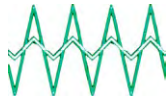
This weekend, as well as later this month, operators across all 83 ARRL and Radio Amateurs of Canada sections will take to the air to compete in the two November Sweepstakes events. "Sweeps" is the longest running "domestic" contest. The CW event is Nov. 1-3, while the SSB event is Nov. 15-17. The action both weekends runs from 2100 UTC Saturday through 0259 UTC Monday.



The Operating Guide, [www.arrl.org/files/file/Contest20Guides/2014/201420November20Package.pdf](http://www.arrl.org/files/file/Contest20Guides/2014/201420November20Package.pdf) contains Sweepstakes information and links to help operators understand the event.

The holy grail is to earn a "Clean Sweep" by working at least one station in all 83 sections. Attain this elite level and you qualify to purchase a highly desired Clean Sweep mug for your accomplishment!

## President's Frequency Modulation



By Greg Miller, KA9FOZ

Did you get a chance to enjoy the beautiful weather we have had during October? This weather has been just right to get things done around the house as we prepare for the soon to come winter weather. Did I get everything done as planned? No, but I did get a lot done that I was not planning. The camper has been winterized and put away, the leaves have been picked up and the outhouse has been winterized.

To me this has always been a sad time of year because I never liked having to put things away that I enjoyed. But I have learned to enjoy more and more of the winter months even if it is just sitting in front of a warm fire reading a book or watching a good movie on TV. I even spend more time outside than I used to.

Weather was also perfect for our special event at the Trempealeau Wildlife Refuge. I was a little concerned about the weather conditions, but then I figured Hams have to be ready in any kind of weather. The sky was overcast and the sky to the west looked like rain. Just out of Galesville, sure enough, *rain!* I pushed on and the clouds broke up and the sun emerged. I set up the trailer and others showed up to help with the radios and antennas.

I set up a station at my truck so I could test out the different hamsticks that I brought along. Other than a 10 meter dipole made of two ham sticks mounted in a horizontal position I was not able to get the SWR into an acceptable range. The other hamsticks were 20, 40 and 75 meter verticals. A day is never lost if you learn something in the process and that is what I did. With the help of Carl Thurston, KC9HDS, and Art Osborn, W0JDC, it was determined that the base mount of the antenna did not have enough surface to create the proper ground. After remounting and testing with Art's antenna analyzer the SWR was finally there. So even though I did not make contacts it was fun seeing what the changes did as we tried different things with the antennas. So now I have a new project to work on this winter, improving my mobile antenna situation.

By the way you should have seen the food we had there. For a small group we had some good fixing's. Barbecue, beans and German potato salad. Along with Bob' Seaquist's, KC9IWE, famous pumpkin bars we had plenty to fill us up. No one can say we don't know how to put on a feed at our events.

November does not hold any special ham events for the club but remember we have our meeting on the first Tuesday, which is Nov. 4. We also have the Sunday Night Net every Sunday at 8: p.m. on the 146.97 repeater.

**LAST CHANCE !**

The final RARC VE testing for licensing this year will be Saturday Nov. 8.

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.

The session will begin at 9 a.m. at the American Red Cross office, 2927 Losey Blvd. S., La Crosse. The ARRL fee remains \$15.

*The Golden Age of Ham Radio -- the five-year period centered on when you got your license: Everything before then was a primitive wasteland and everything after that has been going to h\*\*l in a handbasket!*



### Riverland Amateur Radio Club

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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)



# Sharing

By Richard Newstead G3CWI  
[www.sotabeams.co.uk/](http://www.sotabeams.co.uk/)

**Editor's Note:** Richard Newstead, G3CWI, is a RF Design Engineer who turned his hobbies of Amateur Radio and the outdoors into full time operation of SOTABeams. He has also been a communications officer in the Antarctic and helped Great Britain fight the Falklands War. He has much to say about our hobby in this article which is reprinted with his permission.

Recently I was asked to speak on portable operating at the annual G QRP Convention at Rishworth, UK. While preparing I cast my mind back over 30+ years of portable operating with a view to trying to see if there were any common factors in my most memorable portable adventures. To my surprise, I found that there was indeed a common theme. This common factor that made the activities memorable was unrelated to the equipment, location, band conditions or even how many contacts I made. No, the common factor was something rather unexpected; sharing.

All the trips that stick in my mind were greatly enhanced because the activity was shared with someone else. Of course sharing with folks who are there is important but on some of these activations I was alone; the sharing was done over the air with QSO partners.

Some examples:

A family trip to the Norfolk Broads where the radio aspect of the trip was hugely enhanced by a sked with Stockport Radio Society at their club meeting

A backpacking trip in a wilderness area where a daily contact with Einar SM5CBC while I was making breakfast, got each day off to a great start

A hill walking trip where nightly skeds from my tent by Loch Dungeon, with Pat G3IOR really added something very special.

Various SOTA activations in the early days of the scheme where the pool of chasers was very small and there was time to get to know them.

Sharing is something that is quite easy to incorporate into your activities. You are far more likely to get on the air if you know that someone is waiting to contact you and the satisfaction of contacting someone specific by prearrangement is immense. The prearrangement is critical as they already know where you are and what you are doing so the contact can be about something more meaningful.

None of the contacts on my trips were very long, most were on CW. The thrill of hearing someone calling you is tangible especially when you are a long way from home.

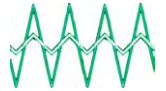
Sharing ought to be much easier these days. Internet groups or specialist systems such as SOTAWATCH can all help. Far better though is sharing with someone you already know. Getting the benefits of sharing requires a different mind set to many portable activities. Sharing has to be about quality, not quantity. It's about making more than a "599 TU" connection.

Listening around the bands these days I hear many "contacts" but relatively few people making any sort of meaningful contact. Maybe it's time to slow down and communicate?



## Tech note

### Best Receivers



Sherwood Engineering has released a new table of receiver ratings and a new "king of the narrow spacing dynamic range hill" is the FlexRadio 6700 at 108 dB.

If you'd like radio's best "ears" in your shack here are the rest of the top 10:

Hilberling PT 8000A; Elecraft KX3; Yaesu FTdx-5000D; Elecraft K3; Perseus; FlexRadio FLEX-5000A; Ten-Tec Orion II; Ten Tec Orion; Ten Tec Argonaut VI.

The RARC's club radio, the Kenwood TS 590S, is in 13th place.

Read more at [www.sherweng.com/table.html](http://www.sherweng.com/table.html)

## The noise

I am listening to W1AW/KP2 Virgin Islands on 20m as I put together this month's "The Key" and it makes me wonder about some of the folks in Ham radio. There is screaming, yelling and, probably worst of all, little listening. What is the matter with these operators? Or maybe the question is "what is the matter with people today?" It seems as though people would rather be nasty than courteous.

Recently Cory Lynch, KC9NOJ, made a comment on the La Crosse Hams reflector about an item in our October issue; his was a polite, helpful note about the use of phonetics on repeaters. What followed were some really nasty snipes by a couple of other local Hams. Why? Why couldn't they simply add their opinion on the topic and not add the nasty parts?

It is about time we follow the adage, "if you don't have something nice to say, don't say anything." Let's have fun in our hobby *WITH* others.

Read the nice great account of Ham radio sharing by SOTABeams owner Richard Newstead, G3CWI, for what Ham radio should be about and what Ham radio is about for many.

-Bob Seaquist  
 KC9IWE

# Taking refuge on a wonderful day

By Carl Thurston, KC9HDS

There was some confusion whether we'd have a Trempealeau Wildlife Refuge Special Event Station this year. There was the problem of registering for the event and also there was a new individual at the refuge who was in charge of the Trempealeau Wildlife Refuge.

The first time we went to the refuge the staff there had been required to file tons of paper work including an entire environmental impact statement!. Then there were the logistics of the event. Fortunately the refuge staff were able to provide entry to the refuge, electric power and extra long extension cords, and for the last few years, a porta potty. These were the things that we could not easily provide by ourselves. The things that the Hams brought were the club's communication trailer with all of its various accoutrements, an assortment of HF rigs and antennas, lots of good food, beverages, yummy deserts, and of course a group of Hams eager to get on the air as they enjoyed to wonderful day with its fantastic fall colors and peaceful environment.

Some years it was a bit colder than what was comfortable. There was at least one year when it rained as we were setting up, but it stopped once we got going. There were years where there were unexpected visitors. There was one year where a group of Boy Scouts attended and got on the air as part of Jamboree On The Air. Added to all of this was the fantastic contacts that have been made year after year during

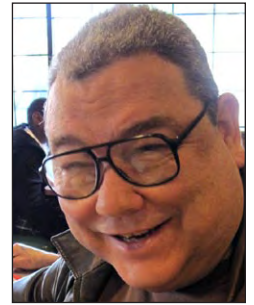
this event. There have been QSOs with Hams in Scandinavia, Eastern and Western Europe, Africa, and South America, as well as contacts with many different Hams in the United Kingdom.

Another thing about this event that has merit is the fact that Hams may try out new things either with old or new equipment. Whether it be HF rigs, antennas, power supplies or antenna tuning devices; this event is sort of like a mini Field Day. Experimenters are not only welcomed, they are encouraged to attend and try their stuff. This is not a competition, but rather a friendly gathering, where new and old friends can play radio and visit with each other in a relaxed atmosphere. The only pressure that is applied here is the pressure that the individual Hams brings to the event. In other words, the goal here is not to achieve as many contacts as possible in a short amount of time, but rather to make friendly, chatting contacts with as many Hams as we can do comfortably.

If this sounds boring, don't you believe it! The watch word here is quality time. Quality time can be educational. Quality time can be entertaining; for both the Hams participating and observers from the public who might

come by.

We have always strived to make contact with other refuges during this event. It was thought that this year would be different. Last year it was uncertain whether we could do it or not because of the government shut down, but fortunately, things returned to normal in time. This year had its own challenge; due to a change in personnel and the National Wildlife Refuge Week Radio website, it was nearly impossible to register for the event this year. It looked like we were going to be the only Refuge with a special event station, but toward the end of the day, a contact was made with a special event station at the Horicon Marsh Refuge, as well as a QSO with another special event station near Tucson, Ariz. at the Titan Missile Museum. That was an unexpected surprise that ended the day.



## Calendar

### Tue. Nov. 4

RARC meeting, 7 p.m., "miniature tools," Gundersen/Lutheran, Lower Level one confer ence.

### Sat. Nov. 8

• VE testing, 9 a.m., American Red Cross, 2927 Losey Blvd. S., La Crosse. No walk ins. Contact Roger Reader, KA9BKK, 608 783 0723.

### Sun. Nov. 9

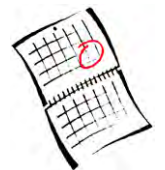
• Wisconsin Antique Radio Club, 8 to 11 a.m., The Terminal, 5917 S. Howell Ave., Milwaukee. [www.warci.org/index.html](http://www.warci.org/index.html)

### Fri. Nov. 28

• La Crosse Rotary Lights assistance, 9 a.m., Riverside Park, La Crosse. (Event not yet confirmed)

### Sat. Dec. 6

• Skywarn Recognition Day, 8 a.m. - 3 p.m., La Crosse National Weather Service office, N2788 County Road FA, La Crosse.



## Duh....di dah

Statistics from the upcoming December edition of QST's "Contest Corral", show 450 different contests some of which are listed monthly of which 335 are HF only and 37 only take place at VHF+. 78 allow operating on both HF and VHF+. Out of those contests, fully three quarters have a CW component far more than Phone 47 or Digital 35.

Is there an operating tip to be learned? Yes learn CW and have more opportunities for radiosporting fun!