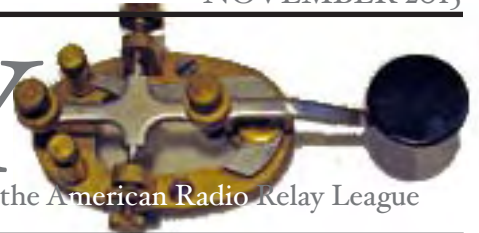


# THE KEY

The Riverland Amateur Radio Club is a Special Service Club affiliated with the American Radio Relay League



## Riverland Amateur Radio Club

P.O. Box 621  
Onalaska, Wis. 54650

## Repeater

146.970 PL 131.8

## RARC Net

8 p.m. Sundays on the  
146.970 repeater.

## Club meetings

7 p.m., Tuesday, meet  
ing room 1, lower level,  
Gundersen/Lutheran La  
Crosse. **Elmer session** 6  
p.m.

## RARC Web page

<http://rarc.qth.com/>



National Wildlife Refuge Week special event station operator Roger Reader, KA9BKK, makes some contacts.

## Refuge event mishaps & victories

Special events such as the great cord hunt, the power supply switcheroo, the chili slosh, and the impress the young girl all were part and parcel of this year's National Wildlife Refuge Week Special Event Station K9P at the Trempealeau National Wildlife Refuge Oct. 17.

Early on, though not *too* early, early risers like Greg Miller, KA9FOZ, Len Litvan, KCØRSX, and Dan Goltz, WKØW, beat down heavy grass to lay antenna counterpoise and throw lines for dipoles into nearby trees. Others hurried to set up tables for the numerous crock pots.

The RARC's newly refurbished communication trailer showed itself to be an excellent operating platform. Miller and Carl Thurston, KC9HDS, had moved the operating bench to a lower, flat and more convenient level plus they added a propane heater for greater comfort.

The Winona club brought its Icom 718, a unit that sat forlornly while Lance Tagliapietra, KBØYJU, hunted high and low for the cord used to connect it to its tuner. Tagliapietra even headed back to Winona in search of it until Goltz read handwritten instructions that pointed out the cord was already in place. Riverland's Kenwood 570 fared no better due to no power supply cord; quick thinking pulled out the club's go kit 2m power supply as a substitute.

Once all cords were connected QSOs came reliably. More than 40 were logged including a couple by an YL, Stephanie, a refuge employee who dropped by to check out the operation.

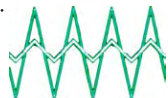
This was the sixth year the Riverland and Winona clubs cooperated on a Trempealeau special event station for National Wildlife Refuge Week.

Participants included: Van Elston, WA9FIO, Tom O'Brien, WB9BJQ, Art Osborn, WØJDC, Roger Reader, KA9BKK, Bob Seaquist, W9LSE, Thurston, Tagliapietra, Goltz, Litvan, and Miller.



A Trempealeau National Wildlife Refuge employee makes a QSO.

## President's Frequency Modulation



By Greg Miller, KA9FOZ

Well it's been an exciting October for the Riverland Amateur Radio Club, from our repeater going silent to a fun trip to the Trempealeau Wild Life Refuge for some morning and afternoon contacts. It's always fun to get the trailer out and get it set up for communications. It wasn't without its issues this time around though. The last time the trailer was set up was field day and tear down at that event allowed some of the items to be stored out of location from past tear downs. Therefore we misplaced a few things and had to make some changes from the normal. It is always a good learning tool when these things happen and it tells us we need to be a little more regimental when we set up and tear down. This is something the club will need to work on and come up with proper procedures so it will not happen in the future. Still, the event can be called a success because we were able to get up and running making contacts throughout the day. Making it all work smoother would be nice though.



As for the repeater, our repeater committee Van Elston, WA9FIO has the situation well in hand. As we go forward he will have more to report and suggestions on getting it whole again. In the meantime it is usable, just running less power at this time.

Well I hope all of you have analyzed your outside antenna issues and have gotten them straightened away for the winter season. I did a walk around with mine just the other night and realized I need to make some changes due to some tree growth causing some problems. So that will get done and winter contacts should take place without issue.

See you at the November meeting.

### Testing

The last time this calendar year to make a license upgrade will be 9 a.m. Sat. Nov. 14, at the Church of Christ, 3506 28th St. South, La Crosse.

Register at least five days in advance with Roger Reader, KA9BKK, 608 783 0723 or [readers@centurytel.net](mailto:readers@centurytel.net).

## Calendar

**Tue. Nov. 3**

♦ Riverland Amateur Radio Club meeting, 7 p.m., LL Conf 1, Gundersen Clinic, 7th & South Ave., La Crosse. "Elmer" session, 6 p.m.

**Sat. Nov. 7**

♦ ARRL November Sweepstakes, CW. [www.arrl.org/sweepstakes](http://www.arrl.org/sweepstakes)

**Sat. Nov 14**

♦ Kentucky QSO Party, [www.wkdx.com/mainsite](http://www.wkdx.com/mainsite)

**Sat. Nov. 21**

♦ ARRL November Sweepstakes, Phone. [www.arrl.org/sweepstakes](http://www.arrl.org/sweepstakes)

**Tue. Dec. 1**

♦ Riverland Amateur Radio Club meeting, 7 p.m., LL Conf 1, Gundersen Clinic, 7th & South Ave., La Crosse. "Elmer" session, 6 p.m.

**Sat. Dec. 5**

♦ Skywarn Recognition Day, 8 a.m. - 4 p.m., National Weather Service Office, N2788 County Road FA, La Crosse. [www.wr.noaa.gov/mtr/bamradio/](http://www.wr.noaa.gov/mtr/bamradio/)



## Wanted



The club seeks someone to head up the float for the Rotary Lights parade. The club gains \$25 extra for participating with a float in that parade.

**We will have a collection of non perishable foods at our Nov. 2 club meeting or drop at Dan Abt's, AB9TS, home, 2610 13th Pl. S., La Crosse.** We can earn an extra 20 from Rotary Lights if we do.

### Riverland Amateur Radio Club

P.O. Box 621  
Onalaska, Wis. 54650

President ..... Greg Miller, KA9FOZ  
Vice president..... Van Elston, WA9FIO  
Treasurer..... Tom O'Brien, WB9BJQ  
Secretary..... Carl Thurston, KC9HDS  
Newsletter editor.. Bob Seaquist, W9LSE



Address correspondence regarding the club to Tom O'Brien, WB9BJQ, [wb9bjq@charter.net](mailto:wb9bjq@charter.net)  
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 [W9LSE@arrl.net](mailto:W9LSE@arrl.net)

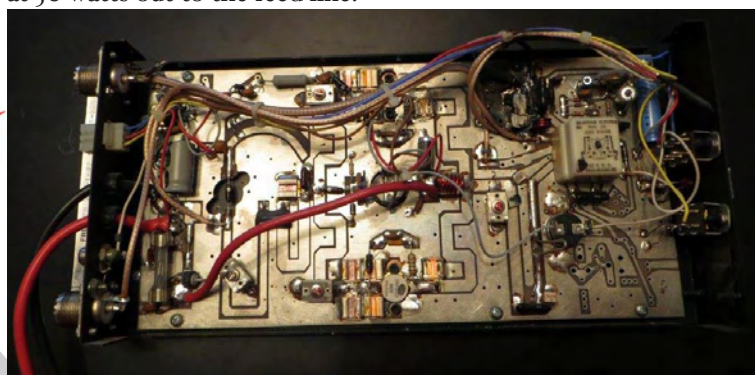
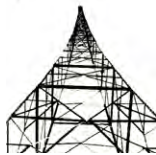


## Repeater Note

By Van Elston, WA9FIO

RARC members have been waiting patiently to hear some report about the "97" repeater, which failed during a Sunday night net. After a lot of investigation and site visits, it originally appeared that the receive antenna had failed. Further examination showed the little Mirage amplifier that we have used for the last 32 years which has been on the air continuously for more than 300,000 hours (!!!) finally failed.


Tom O'Brien, WB9BJQ, and I spent some time analyzing all things. Attached is a photo of the amp. You will notice a dark spot along with a close up of the area. Dark circles on high power pc boards are not a good sign. This workhorse failed. It is obsolete and can't be repaired or replaced exactly. It was operating gently at 50 watts out to the feed line.



The good news is that our original Vertex commercial grade repeater can run at a normal 50 watts output. So after some fooling around in a hot noisy place with test equipment and a DOS able computer we are now back on the air. Be patient.

The bad news is that the Digital Voice Recorder with its personal welcome and announcements appears also to have failed. So, for the moment it is operating with the synthetic voice announcements, while we look in to the DVR. We should be all back in order in a couple of weeks.

Whether these events are related or due to a cosmic ray hit or Chinese Stuxnet worm or a clear air lightning hit is hard to tell, but stay tuned.



**Free CW class on-line**  
 Register for a free CW Academy Class starting in January. Sponsored by the CW Operator's Club, each class takes place over a two month period, and involves training and mentoring to instill or improve CW skills. To register go to [www.cwops.org/cwacademy.html](http://www.cwops.org/cwacademy.html)

## November Sweeps lets you clean-up



In a few short days, one of Ham radio's most popular contests will draw operators across all 83 ARRL and Radio Amateurs of Canada RAC sections will take to the airwaves for the two ARRL November Sweepstakes events. Always a fall

favorite "Sweeps" is the longest running "domestic" contest. The CW event is Nov. 7-9, while the SSB event is Nov. 21-23. The action on both weekends gets underway at 2100 UTC Saturday and runs through 0259 UTC Monday Sunday evening.

As veteran Sweeps hands already know, the exchange for this operating event is a bit more involved than it is for most other contests. Strange terms such as "precedence" and "check" while very familiar to old timers and traffic operators - may seem confusing at first to newcomers. The exchange goes like this: Call sign of the station worked, consecutive serial number NR starting with 001, precedence PREC a letter that indicates your operating category; see the rules, your call sign, check CK the last two numerals of the year you were first licensed, and the two or three letter abbreviation of your ARRL or RAC section SEC.

In your log, for example, if WW1ME works W1MSW, the log entry might look like this:  
 W1MSW 015 A WW1ME 65 ME.

All popular logging programs include a template for ARRL November Sweepstakes. Be sure to use the latest version of your logger.

It may seem difficult and complicated at first, but once you get into the swing of Sweeps, it will start coming naturally. That's also where it starts being fun.

The 2015 ARRL November Sweepstakes Operating Guide [www.arrl.org/sweepstakes](http://www.arrl.org/sweepstakes) contains a collection of Sweepstakes information and links to help both newbies and old timers to understand the rules, operating techniques, and log submission guidelines.

The holy grail of Sweepstakes is to earn a "Clean Sweep" by working at least one station in all 83 sections.

## It was a fine event after all

By Carl Thurston, KC9HDS

In spite of the predictions of doom, the 2015 Trempealeau Wildlife Refuge Special Event Station turned out to be a hit. Most in attendance found the weather refreshing, the food plentiful and tasty, and the company the best. If there was anything to complain about, it was equipment troubles.

Like what so often happens when things were stowed away hurriedly, there was some critical equipment that was mislaid after Field Day.

When it was discovered that the power supply was not in evidence, Greg Miller, KA9FOZ, was sure that it had been left behind at his QTH when the trailer was packed for this event. So since his truck was blocked in by the trailer and antennas and other various cables were already deployed, making it very unhandy to move the trailer, I volunteered to drive him to his QTH to retrieve the power supply.

The day was shaping up to be a lot more pleasant than predicted and I didn't mind taking Greg to get the needed equipment. We had a nice chat as we traveled back to his place. Going over the things that need to be done before the new slate of officers takes over, and speculating as to who those officers will be. Since we are both lame duck officers who can not run again for our current offices, it was a nice change from the continual concerns of running the club. When we got to his house and checked over the equipment that was removed



KC9HDS attempts operating during the special event.

from the trailer prior to taking it to the refuge, we discovered that the power supply wasn't there! A quick mental inventory of the various bins that were in the trailer led us to believe that the power supply was at the refuge after all. It had merely been stowed in the wrong bin and that this must be the answer to this mystery. We returned to Trempealeau and upon arrival the missing power supply was found in a bin that normally houses cabled and ropes. How it wound up in there is anyone's guess, but at least it was found. But the power cord for it was missing and search as we might, it was not to be found. This was especially irksome as the needed power cable was the standard IEEE power cord common to all sorts of electronic equipment, including PCs. Nearly everyone present expressed their irony as we all had at least a dozen or so of these cables laying around the shack in our various QTHs. Eventually a power cord was scavenged

from another piece of equipment that was not in use and we were ready to get on the air.

Having thought that we had vanquished the Gremlins for the day, I set up my rig and antenna, only to find that my radio was unable to tune the antenna that I brought. This was my hubris. I usually drag along so much assorted junk that I spend much time picking through that mess and wind up losing valuable air time trying to get things straight. I had decided that I wasn't going

to fall into that trap again this year, so I included only the bare minimum of gear, certain that all else was superfluous. Alas, I grabbed an untested mag mount that proved to be my undoing. This left me no choice but to munch many snacks, drink several cans of soda, and relax with some of the Winona Hams who joined us for the event.

In the past I have been very successful at this event, reaching out to Europe, Africa, and South America, but it was not to be this year, the Gremlins got me again. Next time I will have back up equipment with me, even if it does mean that I'll be sifting through a pile of equipment that I might not need for the moment. At least that way I might be able to keep those Gremlins at bay, for the time being anyway. The event turned out well anyway. Many QSOs were made, old friendships renewed and everyone had a good time. Wait until next year!

## Hams invited to coronal mass ejection disaster exercise

A disastrous coronal mass ejection (CME) will be the focus of a national MARS communication exercise Nov. 8-10, and MARS is hoping to collaborate with ARES and RACES groups.

The exercise will simulate a CME event and focus on actions that radio operators should take prior to and following a CME event.

CMEs are huge explosions from the Sun, which are responsible for geomagnetic storms. A major CME that hits Earth directly could damage or destroy satellites as well as terrestrial communication and electrical power infrastructure.

The November exercise would simulate a radio blackout as well as infrastructure damage.





## Skywarn event set for Dec. 5



This year's Skywarn Recognition Day to recognize the efforts of amateur radio operators in the Skywarn process, is Saturday, Dec. 5.

The National Weather Service conducts the special event to honor those who volunteer giving "feet on the ground" observations during inclement weather.

According to Todd Shea, KB9YXS, Warning Coordination Meteorologist, there will be stations operating from the La Crosse National Weather Service office, trying to make contacts around the US and world to help celebrate the day. Hams in the office's 14 county service area are invited to participate by visiting the La Crosse NWS office, N2788 County Road FA, La Crosse and operating the radios as well as socializing.

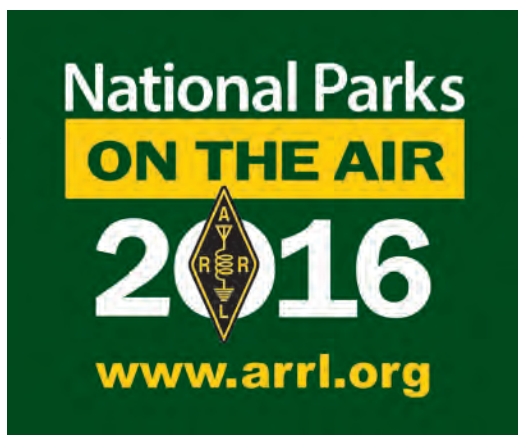
The event will run from 8 a.m.-4 p.m. Tours of the NWS office will be available and there will be snacks all day.

Hams not able to attend may participate from home chasing the many weather service offices operating their stations. Certificates may be obtained for contacting as many NWS offices as possible. You may visit the event web page at [www.wrh.noaa.gov/mtr/bamradio/](http://www.wrh.noaa.gov/mtr/bamradio/)

## National Parks on the Air Event for active Hams

If you enjoyed the ARRL Centennial operating activities, you'll likely flip over the upcoming National Parks on the Air event, which starts Jan. 1. The year 2016 is the 100th anniversary of the National Parks Service. If you like operating outside, setting up field-day style operations, you can activate National Parks, National Battlefields, Historic Sites, Memorials, Preserves, Reserves, Rivers, Seashores, National Scenic Trails, and the like. You'll be "chased" by those working you, and all scores will be reflected in an on-line NPOTA leader board based on the LotW data. Some locations will be extremely rare due to access, size, and/or appropriateness.

"As ARRL just celebrated our own Centennial, and Amateur Radio is often enjoyed in the great outdoors, it seemed fitting to devise a program to help NPS celebrate their own 100th birthday," said ARRL Media and Public Relations Manager Sean Kutzko, KX9X. NPOTA will run throughout 2016, with activity promoted and encouraged from each of the more than 430 official NPS administrative units and affiliated areas across the US. This includes all 59 National Parks as well as National Battlefields, Historic



Sites, Memorials, Preserves, Reserves, Rivers, Seashores, National Scenic Trails, and other units.

The program will have two tracks Chasers and Activators. Chasers will simply attempt to make contact with operators in as many of the NPS units as possible. Activators will attempt to activate as many of the units as possible. NPOTA participants may serve in both roles. Chaser and Activator totals will be tracked via an online Leader Board based on LoTW data, just as was done during the Centennial QSO Party. Access the NPOTA Leader Board directly at <http://npota.arrrl.org>.

Only one contact with any given NPS unit will be required, and no tally will be kept of NPS units based on bands or modes. NPOTA will be administered entirely through Logbook of The World LoTW. No paper logs or QSLs will be accepted for NPOTA credit.

Chaser Award and Activator Award certificates will be available to any radio amateur who has at least one confirmed contact with an NPS unit or who activates at least one unit, respectively. A station's total number of confirmed or activated units will be printed on the certificate. The National Parks Honor Roll certificate will be available to any station confirming contact with at least 75 percent of the 59 National Parks activated in 2016.

While there is no formal partnership between NPS and ARRL for this event, the League has been in discussions with the NPS over the past year, and the National Park Service is aware that increased Amateur Radio activity in their parks is likely during 2016.



# Field Day points

**ARRL Field Day 2015 results show the Riverland Amateur Radio club coming in with a point score of 1,470 ranking the club's entry at 1,196 of 2720 stations. The club, running as a 5A, had 152 QSOs for the June 27-28 event.**

**While propagation was on the sorry side for Field Day, the number of contacts for this year's event rose slightly over 2014 - a modest 1.1 percent - and the number of CW contacts account for all of that increase; phone and digital contact numbers dipped slightly in 2015. Nearly 1.3 million contacts were logged during FD 2015.**

**The number of logs received appears to be an all-time ARRL Field Day record. This year saw 35,369 participants, down slightly from 2014.**