

THE KEY



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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Programs

Tuesday, Oct. 7, "computer controlled radios," 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.

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Riverland Amateur Radio Club members will operate from the Trempealeau National Wildlife Refuge Saturday, Oct. 18. Tom O'Brien, WB9BJQ, (inset) makes contacts from an earlier special event station at the refuge.

Hams celebrate wildlife refuges again

One of the Riverland Amateur Radio Club's favorite events, National Wildlife Refuge Week Special Event Station K9P, is set for Sat. Oct 18 at the Trempealeau National Wildlife Refuge. The club's fourth special event station at the refuge will run from 9 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

There will be the club station and, as has been past practice, members are invited to bring their own rigs and antennas adding to the fun. Hams need food and there will be plenty.

Club members and visitors are also invited to enjoy a beautiful Autumn day.

This is part of a national Ham radio event connecting National Wildlife Refuges from Alaska to Texas. For details go to www.nwrweek.radio.info/

There has been concern about the national event but RARC President Greg Miller, KA9FOZ, says the event has been so popular

among club members that it should continue.

Licensed Hams are invited to help operate the stations and, of course, to enjoy the camaraderie, chow and scenery. The stations will be located in the RARC trailer at the refuge's maintenance shop, near the visitor center. The Trempealeau refuge is at W28488 Refuge Rd., Trempealeau, Wis.

There is also another special radio event the same day, Jamboree On The Air JOTA taking place at Camp Decorah, just off US 53 near Galesville. K2BSA/9 is planned to run from 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. at Camp Decorah, W7520 Council Bay Rd, Holmen.

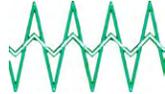
Those interested in coming to camp to help operate should contact Nate Balk, KC9ZXX, natebalk@gmail.com 608 386 3679

More information and preferred operating frequencies may be found at www.scouting.org/jota/operators_guides.aspx

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President's Frequency



Modulation

By Greg Miller, KA9FOZ

Projects, projects and more projects.

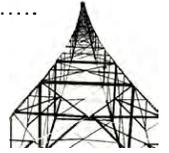
Are you anything like me having more projects than you have time? It seems that every time I turn around I have a new project to get done or an old project that I need to finish. I needed to put siding on the outhouse, and then I decided it would not look complete unless I put a white picket fence around it. Now rain gutters will complete that project. Then the garage needs new soffit, fascia and siding.



After that I have to bury a gas line to the garage so I have heat. The gist of this is that there is always something to do that keeps me from a relaxing sit down at the ham shack desk and making a casual contact or two. I know it is my own fault that I keep adding projects to my calendar but I just can't help it. I am glad that we have nets to check into so that it forces the ham activity, such as the Sunday night Net on the 146.97 repeater. That activity has done a lot for me as far as meeting new hams and honing net control skills. I would like to encourage other hams to join in the fun on the net and consider becoming net control even if it is on a part time basis. It is a learning experience that will help you in your ham radio activities. I also think it would be a good idea to get on a local HF net. I know there is some taking place now but it seems to be at just the wrong time for me. I guess a consideration would be starting one myself but that would be another project to do. It's good I am still working and not retired otherwise I would project myself right out of time.

The next Riverland Amateur Radio Club meeting is Tuesday, Oct. 7, at Gundersen Clinic. Van Elston, WA9FIO, will give a demo of computer controlled radio. Who better to do this than the guy that dabbles in this and is very knowledgeable about it. Plan to attend!

Repeater Note



Netiquette

The principal purpose of the RARC Sunday Night Net 8 p.m., 146.97 PL 131.8 is to train and practice emergency net operations. An example is the occasional times local Hams are called upon for Skywarn duty.

Make your transmissions sound crisp and professional like the police and fire radio dispatchers and the air traffic controllers.

The phonetic alphabet has no place in emergency communication. It should not be used in FM nets.

In order for any communications circuit to operate efficiently, it is necessary to maintain a measure of circuit discipline. This is the job of the NCS. At all times the NCS is the boss of the net. His requests should be complied with immediately. One should never transmit unless invited to by NCS.

For HF operators

State your preference! Two of the "big" in the State QSO Party lineup California and Texas are coming up. And so are Maine and New Jersey, for that matter. State contests are especially good for starting contesters and those with modest stations and antenna farms. Digital mode fans will want to join the excitement in the CQ WW RTTY contest, too!

From counties with millions in population to the deserted desert desserts, the California QSO Party <http://cqp.org/> has managed to wrangle activations of all 58 counties again this year. No mean feat, there will be mobiles and portable stations galore to track down in search of that elusive bottle of wine or other awards.

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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Address correspondence regarding the club to Tom O'Brien, WB9BJQ, 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 KC9IWE@arrl.net



High power customer service

By Bob Seaquist, KC9IWE

Stuff just doesn't seem to be built like in "the good old days" and, worse yet, when you try to get some satisfaction you are on hold for hours. The person who finally answers has a thick, Indonesian accent and cannot or will not solve your problem.

Recently I enjoyed the opposite experience when I bought a very high quality product that came with superlative customer service!

I was interested in a little linear amplifier for my Elecraft KX3 and a friend told me about his Hardrock 50, an amp with great qualities, a fraction of the cost of Elecraft's excellent amp and it was a kit too.

The Hardrock 50 is based on Jim Veatch's, WA2EJ, winning ARRL Home Brew Challenge II amplifier design. The challenge was to build a linear amplifier designed to boost the 5 W, 40 meter output from a transceiver up to 50 W and it had to be duplicated for under 125 using readily available parts.

Now in production, the Hardrock 50 costs less than 300, it comes with very clearly written instructions and it goes together easily.

Customer service!

If for some reason the builder misses a line of instructions, solders the wrong stuff together or otherwise screws up there is a great on-line forum and support group for answers. If all that fails, HobbyPCB www.hobbypcb.com/ promises you WILL have a working amp.

Customer service!

Despite my finely honed electronic skills, my little amp would not work. After much examination, retracing, on line questions and frustration I e-mailed Jim Veatch asking for help. He replied within a few hours customer service! with a friendly, personable message and a couple questions. Then he asked me to pack it up and send it to him.

Bottom line: he traced the problems two resulting from me screwing up, one from his giving a not-so-clear instruction in the manual, fixed them, aligned it for my KX3 and sent it back.

Customer service!

And it works great!

VE testing

The RARC's final 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, 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 required ARRL fee remains \$15.

Calendar

Tue. Oct. 7

→ Riverland Amateur Radio Club meeting, 7 p.m., "computer controlled radios," Gundersen, lower level conference 1. Elmer session, 6 - 7 p.m.

Sat. Oct. 12

→ SEWFARS Swapfest, 8 a.m. to 1 p.m., Richfield Chalet, 1271 Hwy 175, Hubertus.

Sat. Oct. 18

→ National Wildlife Refuge Week special event station K9P, 9 a.m.- 4:30 p.m., Trempealeau Wildlife Refuge, W28488 Refuge Rd., Trempealeau.

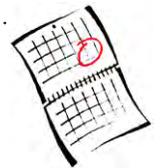
→ Jamboree On The Air, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m., Camp Decorah, W7520 Council Bay Rd, Holmen.

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



Some call this Indian Summer

By Carl Thurston, KC9HDS

We are very lucky to live where we have such fine weather so much of the time. Our Springs are hopeful with the promise of the renewal of the greenery that graces our land. Summer brings the warm breezes that make the corn crops grow. Fall is, to me, the most beautiful of seasons with all of its bountiful harvests and the fantastic color changes that take place as the days grow shorter. Winter... well the less said about winter the better, unless you are into skiing, skating, sledding, tobogganing, or ice fishing.

As we look forward to the beginning of Winter, once in a while we are treated with what has become known as Indian Summer. I confess that I do not know why it is so called, but it does seem to fit somehow. It is often the last great hurrah of the year before the on set of the icy blasts. It also is the end of the pleasant time of year where out door QSOs are the norm and a young Ham's fancy turns to things other than radio.

For the older Hams, this is a time to enjoy one last Special Event Station before the weather makes such endeavors difficult if not impossible. Fortunately, we have two events to act as our curtain call for the year. On Oct. 18 there are both the JOTA event at Camp Decorah as well as my favorite, the Trempealeau Wildlife Refuge Special Event Station. The only thing bad about this arrangement is that since they are for the same date and time and since they are miles apart, it is difficult and



nearly impossible to participate in both. Either event is good and worthwhile. Either event is sure to have its share of good things happening. Either of them will be positive for both the participants and the organizations involved. Both have the potential to increase awareness of the importance of radio in our high tech lives. Both will do wonders for the relationship between Scouting and amateur radio. The only downside to having these events running at the same time is that some will attend one, some will attend the other, but what is really bad is a lot of Hams will be unable to make up their minds as to which one to go to and will eventually opt not to go to either one. The later alternative is especially sad as it results in no one gaining from potential enjoyment and usefulness.

For those of you who have not seen fit to come to either JOTA or the refuge special event in the past, I would like to point out that even if you come without bring your rig, even if you don't directly participate by operating, even if you only come to enjoy the fine day and meet with other radio enthusiasts, you

will at least show support for the continuance of either Amateur Radio, Scouting, or maybe even both.

So, If you have nothing else going on Saturday, Oct. 18, I guarantee that your presence at either of these events will be appreciated and the you be able to say afterwards that either Camp Decorah or the Trempealeau Wildlife Refuge are fine places to go to enjoy the fine colors of fall and to revel in the wonders of another Indian Summer.

I know that there are some of you out there who have last minute chores to do in preparation for the icy onset of winter, and I'm sure that there is an ever present honey do list to contend with, but heck, this is just for one day. Those jobs will still be there the next day and whether you get them done or not is of little consequence. Yes, it will be nice to be all set for Winter, but you can do that another day. A day like there will be Oct. 18 only comes around once a year if you are lucky, so come on out and show your support for these worth while events. You won't regret doing so. When the snow is as deep as your SUV's roof, you'll be able to look back fondly upon the great time you had during Indian Summer, as you excavate your truck to go get groceries.



License classes?

Is there interest in classes for Hams wishing to earn their General or Extra Class licenses? Bill Wood, KE9XQ, is exploring having a 10 12 week course that would maybe meet Sunday afternoons.

"It could be a good winter project," suggests Wood.

He is seeking students and instructors. "With a dozen teachers, we can specialize and cover the ground you felt more comfortable with," he says.

His idea is for a small charge for the class in addition to students purchasing text books.

For more information contact Wood at ke9xq@charter.net

State ARES/RACES confab Oct. 18

The Wisconsin ARES/RACES Conference is al most here. The 16th annual Wisconsin ARES/RACES Conference will be Saturday, Oct. 18, at the McMillan Memorial Library, Wisconsin Rapids.

Registration and agenda information is available at www.wi.aresraces.org/2014_registration.shtml