

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



RARC Net

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



Programs

Tue., Sept. 2, 7 p.m. "dipole antennas."

Club meetings

Club meetings are 7 p.m., Tuesday, at Gundersen/Lutheran in La Crosse. They will be in Lower Level Conference room One, Gundersen clinic.

"Meeting of Elmers," advice, discussion and help, 6 p.m. Lower Level Conference room One, Gundersen Clinic.



For three consecutive years the Riverland Amateur Radio Club has enjoyed a warm, golden, Autumn day while celebrating National Wildlife Refuge Week on the radio. Operations are planned for our fourth special event station, K9P, 9 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. Sat. Oct 18 at the Trempealeau National Wildlife Refuge. It will be another great day of casual operation and food.

We had a great time last year with plenty of hams bringing their own rigs for some additional fun SDR QRP operations, mobile rigs, and others.

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/

Licensed Hams are invited to help operate the two 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.

Jamboree On The Air

JOTA and Scouting need you

Join the Gateway Area Council Boy Scouts, Cub Scouts and Venture Crews on the air Sat. Oct. 18, from 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Operations will be at Camp Decorah, W7520 Council Bay Rd, Holmen. Operators and clubs are urged to participate either by listening and responding to the boys calling as K2BSA/9 or by coming to Camp Decorah and operating with the boys introducing them to the wonderful world of radio.

Those interested in coming to camp to help operate 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



If you must leave the net for a short time let the NCS know how long you will be gone.

-K9LGU/STM

President's Frequency

Modulation

By Greg Miller, KA9FOZ

"If we did the things we are capable of, we would astound ourselves."
Thomas Edison



I think some of that came out over the last few months in the preparation for our annual swap fest. The hard work put in by many showed in our success this year. It was definitely a group effort that showed in how smooth it all came about.

I would like to thank all that helped put on this event and all the sellers and buyers that participated. Our goal is to continue to improve on this swap fest for next year.

Some of us looked for good ideas at the Baraboo swap fest. It never hurts. Maybe I will find another antique radio or microphone for my collection.

Back from Baraboo and no major purchases but still a fun day to look over some of the possibilities I could have purchased. I had my eye on a Hygain vertical but couldn't quite bring myself to bring it home. I do just fine with my five-band dipole. By the way, that is the September subject at our meeting, the construction of dipole antennas. Anyone with an expertise in that subject is encouraged to come to the

meeting and share their knowledge with us.

We keep the business meeting of the club short so we can get on to a social setting to discuss whatever the members want. We throw out an idea, such as the dipole construction, but that does not mean that we can't get into any other discussion that the membership wants. This is your club so let your ideas come out so we can all learn from them.

The Sunday Night Net on the 146.970 (PL 131.8) repeater continues to have a good number of check-ins. Thank-you to all that check in and keep it going.

A very wise man once told me after I mentioned to him that I wish I could play the guitar, "wishing won't make it happen." He was right about that. So what in Amateur Radio do you "wish" you could do? Wishing won't make it happen, action will.

Twice the radio

In radio a dipole antenna is the simplest and most widely used class of antenna. It consists of two identical conductive elements such as metal wires or rods, which are usually bilaterally symmetrical.

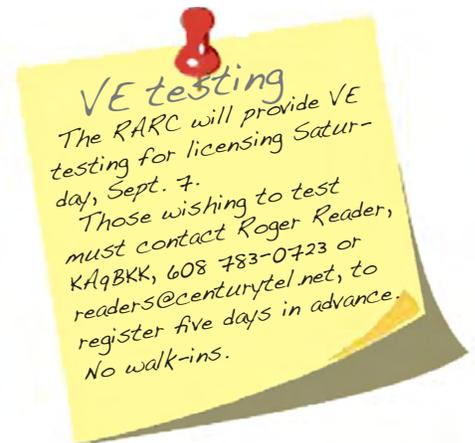
For the uninitiated, think of the old fashioned 'rabbit ears' TV antenna. The dipole not only works very well for Hams, but it is easy to make and even easier on the wallet. All it takes is some wire, a couple insulators, feed line, and a tree or two and ZAP....you have a super-highway to good Ham radio contacts.

The simplest dipoles are one-band affairs, usually wire strung between a couple trees, but there are more dipole antenna designs than there are Hams. There are extremely exacting dipoles measure to fractions of an inch and hung at precise heights and angles; there are also wires carelessly slung over branches.

Learn more about them and get some ideas for building new ones at the Riverland Amateur Radio Club meeting, 7 p.m. Tues. Sept. 2, at Gundersen, La Crosse, lower level meeting room one.



Art Osborn, W0JDC, examines an HT at the swap.



Riverland Amateur Radio Club

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President.....Greg Miller, KA9FOZ
Vice-presidentVan Elston, WA9FIO
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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

Swapfest was great

Every once in a while, things click into place and every thing runs smoothly. This describes the club's swapfest Aug. 9. There were those who said that they would be there that weren't and there were those who said that they couldn't make it but did. Thirty-one tables were set up for the sellers to use and 25 of them were filled. The venue was perfect, the food and beverages were of unexpectedly good quality.

The weather was perfect for the tailgaters who were out in the parking lot. The door prizes were plentiful and well received. ARRL representatives were present and the VE testing went well. One young lady earned her Tech license.

There was no lack of help to set up the tables, to run the talk-in station, or to clean up afterwards. One member, Roger Christenson, N9RWU, who couldn't make it, helped by borrowing the squirrel cage needed from the American Legion for the door prize raffle.

Usually I run into problems trying to get ready for a swap. For the last several years, my old adversaries the Gremlins did their best to foil my efforts. Those who have seen the contents of my garage, know full well what a trove of things are stored there. People always marvel at the haphazard way in which things are piled up in there. When I do get some of that mess felled free and sorted for the Swapfest, it amazes everyone, including me that anything worth while could be extracted from that talus cone of debris. That is to be expected when ever I brave the mass of stuff that teeters ominously when ever anyone is foolish enough to draw near. This year was different. Gremlins did their best to distract me from my task. First our water heater quit. Then, as I was getting things sorted out, the phone was dead. Investigation revealed the wall phone in my garage was ripped off

of the wall and the phone was off the hook.

I can not prove that Gremlins had anything to do with either of these events, but the phone being ripped off the wall in my garage is just plain too coincidental to be ignored. These things slowed me a bit but I was resolute in my determination to improve things for the Swapfest. Bill Wood, KE9XQ, came by with his truck and left with it loaded to the gills with stuff from my garage. That was followed the next week by another friend with a big king cab pickup truck who left with just enough room left in it for him. My garage doesn't look much different than it did before but things are improving. I managed to go to the swapfest where I sold a boat-load of stuff and refrained from buying anything. Several of the members couldn't see me leave with less than I brought gave me a code key and oscillator, two software simulators. And what would a Swapfest be without someone giving me a battery box with two dead batteries in it? So I went home richer because of what I sold, gave away, and received. What more can you ask of a swapfest?



Mitch Schultz, WB0GKH, bargains for swap items.

Ham recruitment and retention

The St. Louis and Suburban Radio Club is hosting a 2 meter FM sprint contest on Saturday evening. As contests go, it's short and unlikely to cause much QRM on the band. The basics - 7 to 10 p.m.; simplex channels from 147.42 to 147.56; exchange of call sign, contact serial number, and Zip code. Operators can stay home, set up from the nearest high spot, or drive around as a mobile.

What's the big deal? No one is going to get over 60 QSOs per hour for very long. The biggest log might be 100 QSOs. Maximum distance might be 30 miles. Why is this newsworthy? Because it's an example of how to introduce new hams and those looking for something new to competitive operating, getting more out of their equipment, and learning some operating skills.

This type of activity is one source of the more activities a Ham experiences, the more likely that Ham is to be a lifetime Ham. It is uncommon that a person selects one particular niche in one particular type of activity and finds that to be enough for a lifetime. Hams who don't get a glimpse of the other things ham radio has to offer often become inactive.

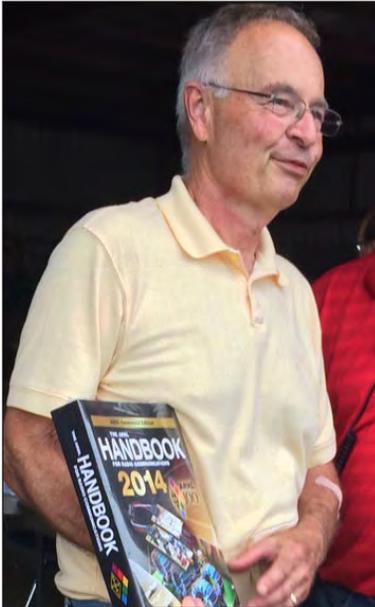
Start small and easy - inviting hams of any level to jump right in to a full-blown expert-level activity may not work well. Finding casual events compatible with beginner skills is far more likely to be remembered fondly by the new participant.

The next step is to give a little of your time to show them the ropes. Success can be as close at hand as showing someone how to adjust their squelch control to copy a weak station or suggesting the use of phonetics or explaining how Zip codes are like these grid square things.

Outreach - both inside and outside ham radio - is the biggest challenge facing ham radio. There are many opportunities available to all of us every weekend. Take the opportunity to help others take the little steps that lead to a lifetime journey.

Circus City Swapfest

By Carl Thurston, KC9HDS



One of the Circus City swap door prizes went to Roger Reader, KA9BKK.

There are several things about Ham Radio that I really enjoy, like Field Day, special event stations, and Skywarn Appreciation Day. These are great opportunities to meet with other Hams on the air, but the things that I like more and more are swapfests. Our swapfest was bigger and better than ever and I look forward to next year's.

The other day several of us made the pilgrimage to Baraboo for the Circus City Swap. It's similar to ours, much the same size, much the same kinds of things for sale, and many of the same people selling and buying there.

I always seem to be extremely disorganized when it comes to a swapfests. Without fail some thing major goes wrong, and this was no exception. I planned to take a pile of junk down there, but the night before suddenly there was a loud crash in my garage. Peg, my XYL, said "what was that?" Like she needed to ask. Obviously the Gremlins were hard at work

on my copious collection of cardboard cartons carelessly compiled in the garage. Upon investigation, my fears were confirmed. A large box of assorted items had cascaded off one of the piles and tumbled haphazardly to the floor. This was suspicious. I had just re-stacked that particular heap of stuff to make it more secure and to improve the safety for anyone wandering out there. Fortunately, no one was any where near it when the Gremlins struck.

Gremlins can be much much worse than any other pest. Suffice it to say that by the time that I straightened up the mess in the garage, all thoughts of taking anything to Baraboo for sale was totally forgotten.

I managed to plan the trip to Baraboo for our group. I was not particularly interested in driving, as my rambling wreck has had it's share of visits by Gremlins as well, plus I got little sleep due to the constant beating of a drum over at the neighboring Onalaska Community Days were in high gear right up to midnight.

So when Bob Seaquist, KC9IWE, showed up with a new Honda Ridgeline truck, and offered to drive, I gladly accepted the offer. Ron Martinmaki, W9EOA, had a small pile of things to sell, which was loaded in back. Greg Miller, KA9FOZ, also came with his truck and agreed to take Tom O'Brien, WB9BJQ, and Art Osborn, WØJDC. On the road by 7 a.m. with a pit stop at Mauston, we arrived at Baraboo by about 9:30. The



Ron Martinmaki, W9EOA, sells some valuables at the Circus City swap.

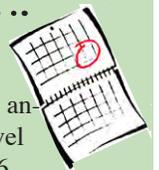
array of stuff was exactly what I was looking for, but then all that I really needed was a mag-mount for one of my Opeks. There were lots of door prizes including an Icom HT and an Icom mobile. Roger Reader, KA9BKK won an ARRL Handbook and Ron sold some of his stuff.

It all wrapped up by 11:45, so we headed home, content with the day's events. I had so much fun, I even forgot about the Gremlins for a bit. I remain ever vigilant regarding their presence at my QTH, one can never be too careful when it come to dealing with them.



Tue. Sept. 2

↔ Riverland Amateur Radio Club meeting, 7 p.m., "dipole antennas," Gundersen, lower level conference 1. Elmer session, 6 - 7 p.m.



Sat. Sept. 7

↔ 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. Sept. 21

↔ Wisconsin Antique Radio Club, 8 to 11 a.m., The Terminal, 5917 S. Howell Ave., Milwaukee. www.warci.org/index.html

Sat. Sept. 27

↔ Ozaukee Radio Club Swapfest, 8 a.m., Cedarburg Firemans Park, 796 Washington Ave., Cedarburg. www.ozaukeeradioclub.org.