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## Power for a Go Box.... By Carl, KC9HDS

For some time now I've been pondering the best method of powering a Go Box station. It seems so simple, just get a nice powerful battery, stow it in a Go Box, and attach it to your rig. The problem is, what battery to use. A nice deep cycle 12 volt 35 Amp hr sealed lead acid battery is a fairly large and heavy item, though sufficiently powerful to power any rig in a Go Box, it is not necessarily the best choice, unless your Go Box is the size of a steamer trunk and you are a world class weight lifter. So that choice is out. Next there are the smaller sealed lead acid batteries of 7 Amp hr size that are not as large or as heavy as the a deep cycle 12 volt 35 Amp hr size, but unless you are running a QRP rig or don't expect to transmit much, its usefulness time wise is very limited. The next choice is a Lithium Ion based rechargeable battery pack. They have the advantage of being smaller and lighter than the afore mentioned types but they are rather expensive and have their own unique issues. BuddiPole makes a nice Nano Phosphate Lithium Ion pack that is fairly small, light and can power a

100 Watt rig for a respectable amount of time (I have used one in the past during Field Day and it last all day so long as I kept my transmissions short with my FT 897D). But it cost about \$300 plus the charger for it was another \$80, so it is a bit spendy.

Recently, I have been experimenting with another possible type of Lithium battery pack, that is normally used to power Ryobi battery powered walk behind lawn mowers. They are somewhat cheaper than the BuddiPole units, are more robustly built and I have been using a 40 Volt 6 Amp hr unit with the rig in my shack. Since it puts out 40 Volts DC I needed to change it to put out a voltage more useable for my FT 991A. Ryobi makes a device that converts the power from a 40 Volt DC battery to 120 Volts AC. With this and a switching power supply, I was able to use this combination effectively in my shack. Granted, it is a bit clumsy with all of that added equipment hooked up together, but it does work fairly well, it is not terribly portable however. So

what I need is a way to reduce the 40 Volt DC power of the battery pack to 12 Volts DC that my rig can use.

First I needed to come up with a means of connecting the Ryobi battery to my rig. I found an adaptor on line that the Ryobi battery would mate with that I could connect to my rig, but I still needed to change the voltage to 12 Volts DC. Next I found a DC to DC (buck) converter that would drop the 40 Volts DC to 12 Volts DC with 10 Amps of out put. That being accomplished, I still have the problem of the current draw of my rig and the amount of time that this battery will power my rig. Theoretically, by dropping the voltage, the duration of the output of the battery should be extended somewhat. On paper a drop from 40 Volts DC to 12 Volts DC should result in a 3 fold gain in duration. That remains to be seen, as I just got the DC to DC converter, and have yet to put it all together. If it works as I hope it will, I'll have a fairly light weight, compact, easy to charge power source that will fit nicely in my Go Box. More about this as time goes on.



## PRESIDENTS COMMENTS

Happy “almost February” to everyone,

As I write this, I am reminded that daylight savings time is a mere 7 weeks away, March 14<sup>th</sup>. Spring is right around the corner. I’m hoping for more outdoor Club related activities in the coming months. Possibly an outdoor, in person, socially distant meeting will be in order!

I am excited to announce a new RARC Club e-mail “reflector” is now in operation. This is for any Club member to post an announcement, question, or even a buy, sell, or trade item.

Keep in mind all members will receive your post via e-mail, so please keep all posts appropriate and related either to Club activities and/or Amateur radio. As always, Ham radio etiquette dictates to shy away from political and religious topics! I think this will be a great way to help keep Club members informed.

Here’s the new address [members@rarc.qth.com](mailto:members@rarc.qth.com)

Another new club activity suggested by Kelley, KD9LQW is what we are calling a Saturday morning “drive by” ragchew. So, if you are near your 2M radio around 8:00 AM give a call out and see who might be listening. It’s another way to keep connected via radio. I know there are a few members who have attended many Saturday morning breakfast outings in the past, but have suspended that for now due to the pandemic. Hopefully that will start back up soon.

Also stay tuned for other new communication tools that are in the works.

Our February meeting will be on the 2<sup>nd</sup> at 7:00 PM. We have somewhat of a surprise presentation from the Ham Shack of our very own Steve Becker, W9DXE. Should be interesting, be sure to tune in. The Zoom meeting link will be forwarded a day or so before the meeting.

If you haven’t mailed in your 2021 membership renewal, please try to send it back by February 15<sup>th</sup>.

A reminder of Winter Field Day coming up on Jan. 30<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup>. There are a few Club members planning some outdoor operating.

Also a reminder if you have any submissions for the Club Newsletter, The Key, please send them to our editor, Kelley Becker at [kelleyll23@hotmail.com](mailto:kelleyll23@hotmail.com).

Also for your on-line purchases, please remember to try [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com) and designate 0.5% of your purchase to be donated to your favorite charitable organization, the RARC ! There is no cost to you and you get the same products, prices, and services as regular Amazon.

Feel free to contact me with any other comments or suggestions at [rckolter@gmail.com](mailto:rckolter@gmail.com).

73 for now, Rick KD9GVS 

## Break Tags

As participants in our club's Sunday night net, we are conditioned not to break into an ongoing conversation unless asked to do so by Net Control. We feel comfortable stating our call sign during check-ins and offering up traffic when Net Control tells us it is our turn. There is rarely an urgent need during this net for a Ham to break into a conversation and introduce another topic to take precedence over the existing conversation. Consequently, new Hams are likely unfamiliar with how to appropriately break into a net conversation when necessary.

In the past, if in fact there was a need to break into the conversation, the convention was to either say "Break" or your call sign to get recognized by Net Control. While this lets Net Control know a Ham wants to break into the conversation, it doesn't convey what level of priority the interjecting Ham feels should be placed on this "Break". The "Break" could be interpreted by Net Control that the Ham has a question for the net or that he/she needs to provide info on an emergency situation. While the relevance of this may not seem apparent with regard to our Sunday night net, it certainly does during our Storm Spotter nets that often occur during Tornado season. During these types of nets, a simple and effective way of indicating a "Break" is requested and its level of importance is needed. A group of Hams in Muskegon, Michigan came up with a simple solution for this issue after working an event in their area. They created 7 "Break Tags". These "Break Tags" consist of 6 one word statements and your call sign to designate what type of "Break" is being requested. It allowed Net Control to more efficiently manage the net by knowing how to prioritize on going traffic and the interjecting breaks. The 7 "Break Tags" are listed below. These Break Tag definitions were taken directly from an online article titled ***Break Tags: Keep your Net Control Operation Running Smooth by Michael Martens | Jul 9, 2014 | ARES/RACES*** as well as information about the Muskegon, Michigan referenced above.

***Answer:*** To be used when you have the definitive answer to a question currently being discussed on the air.

***Question:*** To be used when the answer of a question can't wait; for example, when the mayor is standing next to you and requesting you to get information using your radio.

***Info:*** To be used when information needs to be transmitted rapidly but is not related to what is being said on the air; for example, if an event that net control

*needs to know about is going to happen in the next few seconds or if waiting for the end of an exchange will negate the value of the information.*

**Priority:** *To be used to report an important but non-life threatening situation such as a fender-bender that just happened.*

**Medical:** *To be used to report a minor medical incident that affects the operator in some way; for example, having to leave his/her post for a few minutes to walk someone with a minor cut over to a med tent.*

**Emergency:** *Only to be used to report an ongoing life or property threatening or damaging incident.*

**Your Call Sign:** *An indication that the operator has traffic that can wait and does not require the cessation of the ongoing exchange. This tag is an expectation to be put on hold and in queue for transmission.*

73, Shawn KD9KGQ



### UPCOMING EVENTS FOR February 2021

RARC Sunday Night 2Meter Net is held on the 146.970 repeater at 8:00 PM. Net control operators for December are:

February 7, 2021	Rick kd9gvs
February 14, 2021	David kd9epn
February 21, 2021	Shawn kd9kgq
February 28, 2021	Mark kb9ofk

- ◆ Saturday morning Ragchew, weekly on the 146.970 repeater, 08:00-09:00 AM.
- ◆ February 2...Program Night, Time: 07:00 PM, <https://zoom.us/j/99796168272>
- ◆ February 13...Amateur Radio Testing, Time 09:00 AM, Church of Christ, 3506 S. 28th St., La Crosse. \$15.00 fee. No walk-ins, those interested in testing should contact Roger at least 5 days in advanced at [Readers@centurylink.net](mailto:Readers@centurylink.net) or 608-783-0723. NOTE: the FCC will soon not accept social security numbers, but will require those testing to have a FRN number. Further, the FCC will also require each applicant to supply an email address.
- ◆ February 15...Trustee Meeting, Time: 06:30 PM, <https://zoom.us/j/4371634806>

# RIVERLAND AMATEUR RADIO CLUB

## Monday, January 18, 2021 Board Meeting Minutes



**Meeting Called to Order at 5:41 PM.**

**Members Present; Rick Kolter, David Peters, Drew Neve, Ronald Severson, Shawn Hicks, Steve Becker, Carl Thurston. Guests present; Dan Abts**

**A motion was made and seconded to approve the December 2020 meeting minutes.**

**Treasurer's Report:** Was approved.

**Officer's Reports:** There were no officers reports.

### **Old Business**

**Newsletter Articles were discussed and Kelley Becker the editor of the newsletter has requested articles be submitted by January 26<sup>th</sup>, 2021.**

### **Committee Reports**

Repeater Committee did not make a report; however, some discussion arose about intermittent static or ability to hear or receive signals from the repeater. Several people reported that the problems seemed to be related to weather conditions. Some potential troubleshooting methods were discussed, and it was determined some inquiries would be made about the ability to access the repeater building to do some testing to determine if issues can be detected. Rick K will email the Station contact to find out the process of gaining entry during this Covid-19 protocol period.

### **New Business**

Program List – We have a March program lined up – Carl Luetzelschwab K9LA will present a 30–45-minute presentation about solar topics (Cycle 25 predictions and its progress) and propagation topics (what to expect in the next year or so).

February Program topic at this time is a question mark, some idea's are being looked into so it will be a surprise at the meeting.

Winter Field Day – There were not plans to do the Winter Field Day as a Club this year, there are several members who may do some solo events.

Discussion about the creation of an RARC member list e-mail reflector – Dan AB9TS will help with this and at the present time there is a Board only reflector that may be replaced with a entire membership reflector to enable club members to communicate better.

All the Club officer's duties and transfer of files to the New Office holders is complete or nearly complete with thanks to the previous office holders for a smooth transition.

New Topics of discussion included the following:

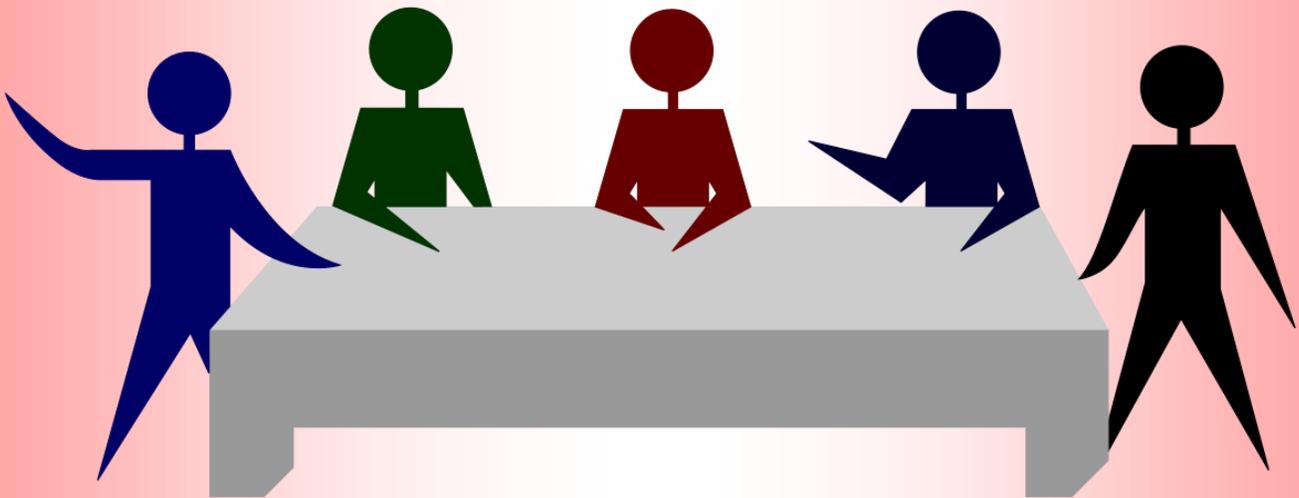
Saturday Morning Ragchew to talk about whatever anyone is interested in talking about, time is 8:00 to 9:00 AM. It will be an informal net without a net control, and everyone is welcome to get in on the fun on the 146.970 repeater.

An anonymous survey of the members to get feed back on things that they would like to do or have the club do or stop doing is being proposed and will be coming your way so watch your email boxes. It will not have your name or call sign on it when it comes back so use it as a suggestion box.

Also, a reminder that all members are well come to attend the board meetings whether on zoom or if they are again in person. If you want the zoom link sent to you let Rick Kolter know.

Future Board Meetings will be at 6:30 P.M. instead of 5:30 P.M.

Meeting adjourned



*\* Anyone who is a member of the Club are welcome to attend the RARC Board meetings.*

## Why You Should Join an Amateur Radio Club

Why should you join an Amateur Radio Club? I can think of many reasons. First and foremost among them, the opportunity to meet and get to know other ham operators in your community. There are almost one million amateur radio operators in The United States, but within your local community they are probably not on every block. Ham radio is no different than any other hobby, be it model aircraft builders or Civil War reenactors. We are a minority of the general public, so we band together to assist each other with our hobby, and to socialize with like minded individuals. Particularly for the newcomer, joining a club is almost a necessity, and here is why.

When anyone first gets into a hobby, they have questions, lots of questions. Some of the answers can be found in books or on line, but like any hobby, ham radio has a lingo all its own. For the newcomer, the lingo can be very intimidating. Being in a club allows one to absorb some of the language just by hearing it in context. Most hams are only too happy to explain it to someone else as well.

Where the question of equipment is concerned, the choices are overwhelming. Club members can make sense of the choices and direct the tyro to solutions that make sense for his or her unique situation. People live in different kinds of communities and have different restrictions on what they can put up for antennas. Within the home, the space available for amateur radio might be a whole room, or it might be just a little space on a desk somewhere. Spouses also have different ideas on what and where they will be happy with radios in the house or the car. Since family always must come first, the advice of more experienced operators can be invaluable in getting amateur radio and your own personal zoning board to happily co-exist.

Inevitably, at some point the new ham operator is going to come up against a problem. It could be equipment related or antenna related or any of dozens of other problems. Trying to work it out alone can be difficult to say the least. If you belong to a club, it is a simple task to ask another member with more experience for help or advice. Down the road, someone will be asking you similar questions and suddenly you realize that you have become the expert that newcomers look to for help.

Most ham operators have more interests than just amateur radio. They may be expert gardeners or woodworkers or collectors. By joining a club and participating actively in it, you can avail yourself of the friendships and social contacts that the club provides. Who knows, you likely bring a skill or an experience level to the club that others will see as valuable too.

Another area where belonging to a club brings benefits is in the area of what I call "the big project". If there is a need for a tower to be erected, or some other large job, club members can be counted on to band together to get it done, whether for the club as a group, or for the benefit of an individual member. Just remember to reciprocate on the next "big project" for someone else.

To find an ARRL affiliated club in your area, go to <http://www.arrl.org> and look up clubs in your area by zip code, section or state. Visit several of them to find one that suits your interests. Then join one or more of them. Also **JOIN THE ARRL**. The services provided to the members and the publications they put out are a cornerstone of the hobby. You will find the ARRL Handbook (as just one example) on the bookshelf of almost every professional electronics engineer in the world. The ARRL is amateur radio's most important representative to the FCC and to the world. They protect our spectrum from encroachment by vested interests and speak for us to the government. They also do much more, but that would take a whole book to describe. Just a few of the benefits are affordable insurance on your radio equipment, awards, email forwarding, license renewal, technical information, regulatory information and on and on. The cost is only 39 dollars per year and no better bargain is to be had anywhere.

73, N1GY 

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## CLUB INFORMATION



### Riverland Amateur Radio Club

PO Box 621

Onalaska, WI 54650

- \* The Key is published monthly and e-mailed to members and friends of the Riverland Amateur Radio Club by the 28th of each month.  
The newsletter focuses on news, announcements and activities of the Riverland Amateur Radio Club. It may also consist of news and information of interest to the Amateur Radio community as a whole. Guest editorials and articles related to Amateur Radio are welcome. Contribution articles should be submitted NLT the 26th of the month.  
Address any correspondence or anything that should be included in the newsletter to: Kelley Becker at KelleyLL23@hotmail.com.
- \* The Riverland Amateur Radio Club maintains a website at [rarc.qth.com](http://rarc.qth.com). More information about the club can be found there as well as past copies of The Key.
- \* RARC also maintains a Facebook page where members add information and share their Amateur Radio adventures. Please friend us at Riverland Amateur Radio Club—RARC.
- \* RARC maintains a repeater that is located on the WXOW television tower above La Crescent, MN. 146.970 pl 131.8.
- \* RARC holds a weekly 2meter net on Sundays at 8:00 PM on the 146.970 repeater.
- \* Trustee Meeting is held the 3rd Monday of the month at Perkins Restaurant, 9428 State Road 16, Onalaska, WI 54650 at 5:30 PM, all club members are welcome.
- \* Program evening is held the 1st Tuesday of the month at 7:00 PM, elmer session at 6:30 PM at 401 West Avenue in LaCrosse.
- \* Weekly "Drive by" Ragchew on the 146.970 repeater on Saturday's from 8:00 AM to 9:00 AM. Stop by to say "hi".

### **Below are listed your RARC 2021 Board of Trustees and contact information.**

President.....Rick Kolter, KD9GVS Email...[rckolter@gmail.com](mailto:rckolter@gmail.com)

Vice-President.....David Peters, KB9EWG Email...[kb9ewg@gmail.com](mailto:kb9ewg@gmail.com)

Secretary.....Ron Severson, KD9OHQ Email...[ronaldseverson54@gmail.com](mailto:ronaldseverson54@gmail.com)

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Trustee.....Carl Thurston, KC9HDS Email...[kc9hds@gmail.com](mailto:kc9hds@gmail.com)

Trustee.....Steve Becker, W9DXE Email...[sbecker54656@yahoo.com](mailto:sbecker54656@yahoo.com)

Repeater Trustee...Shawn Hicks, KD9KGQ Email...[eistim68@gmail.com](mailto:eistim68@gmail.com)

Newsletter Editor.....Kelley Becker, KD9LQW Email...[kellyLL23@hotmail.com](mailto:kellyLL23@hotmail.com)