RIVERLAND AMATEUR RADIO CLUB (RARC) LA CROSSE, WI

THE KEY

ISSUE 1 FOR 2026 JANUARY 2026

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

What did you do this month?

After reading Drew's column in the last 2 newsletters I connected my power supply and transceiver to a common ground.

Tom Jeffers wd9eaj

I went to a Silent Key's estate sale and purchased a 2 meter radio, power supply, some coax, and books.

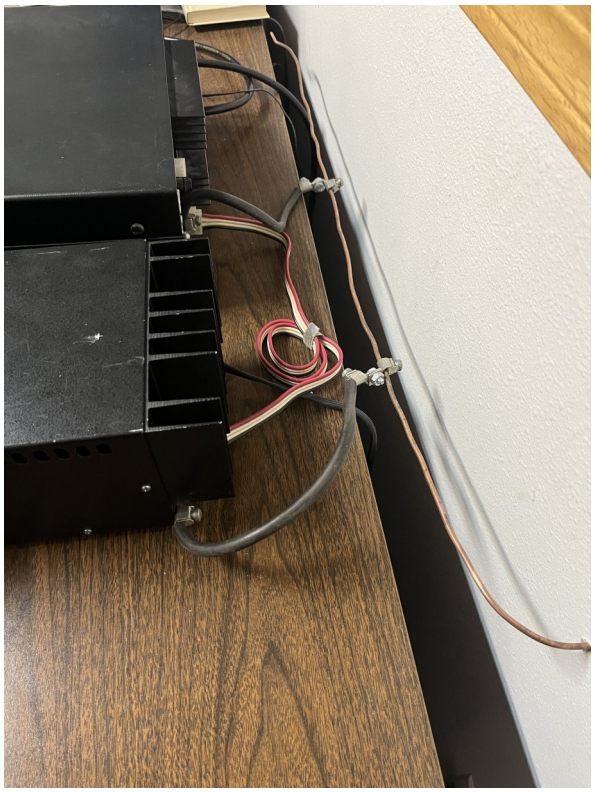
John KD9TOR

I checked into the normal nets that I check into on both 2 meters and Echolink. I did my usual VE testing, and I attended the Winlink conference and got myself running on 2 meters Winlink

David kb9ewg

I made 425 CW contacts in the ARRL 10 Meter Contest.

Vic WT9Q



UPCOMING Events for December 2025

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

January 4, 2026	Jon KD9WPD
January 11, 2026	Mark KB9OFK
January 18, 2026	David KD9EPN
January 25, 2026	Wayne K0WLO

- **Saturday** morning Rag chew, weekly on the 146.970 repeater, 8:00-9:00 AM.
- **January 6 ...**Annual Holiday Party at Schmidty's Restaurant.

  This is the annual meeting. We are selecting officers for 2026
- **January 20…** Trustee Meeting, Time: 5:30 PM, Las Margaritas. All members are welcome to attend.
- **January 24…** Winter Field Day at Jaycee Fields Community Park. Onalaska.

PRESIDENTS COMMENTS

RARC Members and Friends:

Greetings all, well, here is the end of December. Here we are into January 2026. I can't believe how fast the year has gone. First, I want to start out with a huge Thank you to Scott KB3MKD and Amos KE9AHQ for your time and service to the board and I want to Welcome Lisa KE9APN Our new club secretary and Dave KE9BVE our new Board member at large it's great to have you on the Board.

Our next Club Meeting will be the annual Post-Holiday party which will be at At Schmidty's Bar & Restaurant 3119 State Rd La Crosse, WI 54601. Cocktail Hour is 5:30 and Dinner is served at 6:30. please RSVP to David KB9EWG at kb9ewg@gmail.com .

If you intend to attend Winter Field Day will January 24th we will be at Jaycee Fields Community Park 515 Onalaska, WI 54650 in the shelter food will be pot luck please bring a dish to pass.

We already planning on the Wisconsin QSO Party which will be on March 15th we are planning on being at the same park in Stoddard, WI that we have in the past. Please bring a dish to pass.

I am looking to continue Hams In the Park as that is a popular event with the club members. I have some ideas for some other events as well. I am looking forward to 2026 and what it has to offer. I hope everyone had a good Christmas or whatever appropriate Holiday you celebrate Happy New Year and I hope to see everyone at the Holiday Party.

So it's great to see some good events coming up to kick off the year for the Club. I hope to see everyone at the next club meeting which is the Post-Holiday Party

Until then, 73 David Peters KB9EWG,

your 2025/26 Club President 

Noise Mitigation Pt 3

Noise Mitigation Part Three

The focus of this article picks up with a principle that has previously been discussed: that is the disruption of the electromagnetic fields that surround wires carrying current.

In an earlier installment, we compared wires between components of equipment to antennas. Those wires make up a large part of the interference we experience in a multi-transmitter environment. There is a great deal of RF energy in the area, and it causes problems when it is picked up by these wires and carried into our receivers. It happens both in component inputs like microphone or cw key wires and in DC wires from power supplies.

Our discussion has so far centered on ways to treat wires to impede those interfering currents like toroids and ferrite cores. We also talked about ensuring that all our equipment has a common ground. There is another concept of which we have familiarity in another setting that we can use to help disrupt those EMF fields…

When we use parallel feedlines for antennas, we must be sure that we don't run them along metal surfaces or on the ground. We do this so we don't disrupt the currents that the wires carry between our antennas and radios. We can use this same concept in noise mitigation. The same metal surfaces that disrupt currents on the antenna feedlines we want to work well can be used to disrupt currents that we do not want in feedlines between components.

We use the term ground plane for several different things in radio. The ground plane used for noise mitigation in a multi-transmitter environment is the surface on which the radio, surrounding components, and their cables sit. We want that surface to be metal – screen or aluminum foil are OK, but sheet metal is better. It is also acceptable to add a metal surface to the top of a non-metal table, like a wooden picnic table, or portable plastic table. It does not have to cover the entire table, but at least the area where the transceiver, auxiliary components, and cables will sit. The surface will also ideally be bonded to the components as we discussed in the first of these articles.

This concept might be executed in any number of ways. An operator who will work frequently in multi-transmitter environments might seek a metal table, or modify a plastic table with a metal top that will have a solid connection to a copper pipe extending the back side for grounding of all components. A less ambitious approach might be to lay aluminum foil or screening on a table for an event. A QRP operator who's station takes up a small footprint on the table might even simply bring along a baking sheet to lay out the rig, battery and key while coiling the cables neatly and laying them on the metal surface.

Multi-transmitter environments are hotbeds of RF energy by their nature. Some transmitters are more likely than others to cause a problem. We need to work together as a group to identify them and discontinue their use in a group setting. This needs to be done in a way as not to demean the owner or rig. All rigs have their strengths and weaknesses. What I've done in this series of articles is to summarize and simplify some of the things that we can do to our receivers to reduce their susceptibility to RF interference.

I hope these articles help. My primary source was Grounding and Bonding for the Radio Amateur, 2017, American Radio Relay League. I would recommend it to any Radio Amateur.

I read it primarily from the interest of noise mitigation, but it also has important information for safety around AC power sources and lightning strikes as well. These are all important topics.

I'm happy to loan my copy to anybody interested. I got it on a free download.

73

Drew Neve

AB9NE 

What Did You Do This Month?

This month, I worked the 7th Annual "12 Days of Christmas" Special Event Stations. It runs from 14 - 25 Dec. I've gotten all 12 Stations so far but the bonus station in Puerto Rico is still eluding me. All SSB, it's always interesting to hear how the different stations manage the huge pile-ups. Some pick partial call-signs out of the noise, others run it by the numbers (FCC Call Regions). Either way, it's impressive how the stations get the job done!

Dan

Lisa McCarty KE9APN

I've been experimenting with Andy's Ham Radio Linux; particularly the Not1MM logging package.

Drew

AB9NE

I attended a Winlink seminar associated with the ARES group in Lacrescent.

I also took part in a portable operation called "Christmas in the Park" at Apple Blossom Park north of Lacrescent.

BUY-SELL-TRADE-ISO

Please submit your Article by the 26th of the month and include "The Key" in the subject line.

Send your Amateur related classified ad(s) to Scott, NLT noon the 26th of each month to kb3mkd@arrl.net. Please Include "The Key" in the subject line.

Wanted: Articles for The Key

Looking for items for this space

What Did You Do This Month?

I recently got APRS working on my Kenwood TH-D75. APRS is a pretty cool feature available for hams. For those who might be interested, I think one of the better places to start to learn more is:

https://how.aprs.works/00-aprs-resources/

For those that want to just take a peek at a map of some of the stuff using it try:

https://aprs.fi

And finally, the membership should be aware that they can use a smartphone (standing alone, or in conjunction with a more basic radio with a device like a Digirig) to serve as an APRS client if they do not have an an actual radio set up for it. The club has used APRS to some extent in the past at events, and I think it is a cool tool to garner some interest by the public.

So that's something I have been up to with ham radio recently.

73

Jon (KD9WPD)

My two oldest granddaughters ages 9 and 11 came over Christmas eve. We got on the CQ Santa net on 3.916 at 7:00 pm. We could hear Santa very well and he could hear us too. He asked each of them what they wanted him to bring them for Christmas. They both said "a dog". Well Santa, being a wise old man, said that a dog is a big responsibility and they would have to get that cleared with their parents. He asked them to say "Ho Ho Ho Merry Christmas". They shouted it into the mic. He wished us Merry Christmas and moved on to the next kids on the long list.

Dan AB9TS

Hi, Scott. I figured out how to connect the audio from this radio to my hearing aids, which helps me tremendously.

Dave KE9BVE

What Did You Do This Month?

Editor's note. The following was from October

Lisa, KE9APN, recently earned her third "Kilo" award from Parks On The Air by surpassing 1000 QSOs completed from park US-11958, Coon Creek State Fish and Wildlife Area. Her previous Kilo awards were for operating from the Genoa National Fish Hatchery (US -11955) and the Upper Mississippi Wildlife Refuge (US -4236).

After RARC canceled their Wisconsin Parks On The Air outing on September 20th due to thunderstorms, Mike, KB9HV, operated the annual contest from home in the "WI Operators Not In Park" category. He was recently notified by the Fox Cities Amateur Radio Club, the sponsors of the event, that he won a first place plaque for that category by completing 22 QSOs on various modes with 13 Wisconsin parks for a 286 point total.

In October, father and son members, Mike, KB9HV, and Mike, KE5RJJ, attended the First Annual WapsipiniCon QRP campout at Pinicon Ridge State Park near Central City, Iowa. The event was sponsored by the Iowa Club QRP club and was held at a beautiful group campsite along the Wapsipini River. They reported that while the turnout was slim, there was great comradery and it was a beautiful fall weekend for camping.

In September, members Lisa, KE9APN, and Mike, KB9HV, were perusing maps for Wisconsin state lands that hadn't been added to the Parks On The Air system. They found Tamarack Creek Wildlife area, a 542 -acre state property in Trempealeau County, and suggested it as an addition to the POTA program through the state coordinator, Ryan, K9ZIE. It was approved and added as park US-1262. Lisa was then the first to activate that new park reference on September 13th

Mike kb9hv

HF Kits - Endfed Antenna

A couple of years ago Ken W9GM took me out and introduced me to the fun you could have doing Parks On The Air (POTA). We activated two parks that time and probably made over 30 contacts at each park (10 is required to be considered an activation according POTA rules). On that outing we used his vertical Hamsticks mounted to the roof of his vehicle using a mag mount. His setup worked really slick. I was impressed with the speed at which the station could be set up and making contacts. So much so that I requested Santa bring me a set of Hamsticks for Christmas.

When Ken suggested we should go out again this past October, I was more than eager to go. When he picked me up and headed out, I assumed we would be using the Hamsticks again. That was not the case, Ken had other plans for this first of two activations. Prior to this he had built an 1:49 UNUN HF Kits Endfed antenna and he introduced me to its capabilities during set up.

After a few misplaced casts from a Zebco fishing reel mounted on a PVC tube with a washer on the end of the fishing line; he was able to reel up the Endfed antenna line to a nearby tree branch. I set up the card table and chairs from which to operate the radio while pretending I knew what I was doing :) In no time we were making contacts on 10 Meters and attracted a few people in the park asking about the station setup.

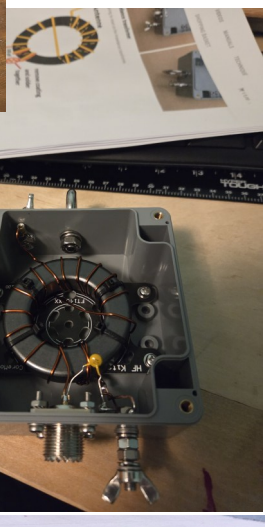
From this outing I was inspired to build my own 1:49 UNUN HF Kits Endfed antenna. I believe Ken ordered his through ARRL, but I wound up buying directly from HFKITS.com. Before I ordered it online, I reviewed the build instructions briefly. I was a little apprehensive about doing the build because of the soldering and the winding of copper wire had to be done correctly or the antenna wouldn't function as designed. Done properly the antenna is supposed to supply a respectable SWR on 10, 15, 20, and 40 Meters (and 80 if you elect to build a coil trap supplied with the kit, which I did not).

Once it arrived, I took a deeper dive into the written documentation from the website and accompanying YouTube build video. The instructions for the most part were fairly decent and straight forward. The instructions did switch to Dutch or German about 2/3's of the way through for a paragraph and then back to English. Additionally, the YouTube's build had the connector indexed 90 degrees from that of the written instructions but either orientation works. I just took my time during the build and kept referring back to the written instructions and video to avoid any silly mistakes. Having some machinist layout tools and a Craftsman drill press to use at the house allowed for an easy and accurate placement of the mounting holes in the outside box.

After completing the build, I used a plastic fence post from Farm & Fleet to hang the transformer box and hoisted the wire antenna up from my SOTABEAMS fiberglass telescoping mast in my front yard. I quickly checked the SWR on the four bands I plan on using it for, and started making contacts on 15 Meters.

73

Shawn KD9KGQ



CLUB INFORMATION

Riverland Amateur Radio Club

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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 consists 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: Scott Cross KB3MKD@arrl.net. Please include the word "Key" in the subject line of your submission.
* The Riverland Amateur Radio Club maintains a website at 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 there 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 Cresent, 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 Tuesday of the month at Las Margaritas 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 Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, 401 West Avenue in La Crosse.
* Weekly "Breakfast Club" Ragchew on the 146.970 repeater on Saturdays from 8:00 AM to 9:00 AM. Stop by to say "hi".

Below are listed your RARC 2025 Board of Trustees and contact information.

President……..David Peters, KB9EWG Email… kb9ewg@gmail.com

Vice-President……..Drew Neve, AB9NE Email...ab9ne@yahoo.com

Secretary……..Lisa McCarty, KE9APN, Email lisarmc@aol.com

Treasurer……..Michael McCarty KB9HV Email kb9hv@icloud.com

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