

**RIVERLAND
AMATEUR RADIO
CLUB (RARC)
LA CROSSE, WI**



THE KEY

ISSUE 3 FOR 2022

MARCH 2022

**INSIDE THIS
ISSUE:**

Not Just Another Net	1
President's Comments	2
RARC Board Meeting Minutes	3
Looking Back...	5
Linux vs Windows	6
Hamud Faal Search	7
RARC General Meeting	8
Events & Buy, Sell, Trade, ISO	9
Club Info	10

Not Just Another Net

If you like participating in nets as much as I do and enjoy tinkering with packet radio, there is a new packet radio net that has been up and running in the La Crosse / Winona area for a few weeks now that may be of interest to you. This local net is the brainchild of our very own club member W9GM. It was his idea to make use of the existing packet radio network in the area to encourage more participation in this mode.

Thanks to the work of our friends in the Winona Amateur Radio Club, this net has access to the W0NE-11 Chat Room on the W0NE-7 packet radio node and is used for this net. As detailed in a previous article this packet radio node station's antenna is located on a 300 ft. tower in Witoka, MN, which gives it extensive range in Wisconsin and Minnesota. Connection to the Chat Room can be made on either the 145.03 MHz or 145.67 MHz packet radio frequencies.

This net is being held weekly on Wednesdays at 7 PM and runs for roughly an hour in duration. Similar to phone nets, the net has a net control to keep things running as smoothly as possible. The net is essentially a round table discussion of any topic (with religion and politics being prohibited) that each participant may want to throw into the mix.

Once signed into the Chat Room you will see your call sign and the call signs of others already signed into the room. As more participants sign in their call signs get listed as well. This is how net control knows who is in the room and can formulate a sequence order upon which to call on for participation. When net control calls on you, you have the "keyboard floor" so to speak allowing you to talk about your busy day at work, the weather, sports, a new ham radio project you're working on, etc. After you have finished, it is customary to type "KK" signifying you are done with your turn and net control can call on the next participant to have their turn. Once everyone has their turn, there is a second and a third round and they follow the same order as the first round. After the third round, the net generally wraps up for the week.

The net is a fun way to improve your packet radio skill sets for those new to the mode and refresh those skills for those that have taken a break from packet radio for a while. There are a multitude of radio, hardware, and software configurations that can be used to connect to the net and is beyond the scope of this article. If you are interested in joining in on this net but currently lack all the equipment to connect, you may be wondering what the best radio setup for your situation is. If that is the case, I encourage you to contact Ken W9GM at Ken@W9GM.com. He is a wealth of packet radio knowledge and is always willing to Elmer others in packet radio.

In closing I hope to see your call sign on the next packet radio net. I'm sure you will find it a fun and interesting addition to the nets you may currently participate in. Until then I bid you all 73.

Shawn KD9KGQ



PRESIDENTS COMMENTS

Greetings to all Club Members,

With winter weather still in high gear, it is sometimes hard for me to avoid the blues in the long wait for green grass to once again appear in my lawn. Firing up the lawn mower in 80° F weather is a lot less tedious it seems than firing up the snow blower in 20° F weather. Although winter doesn't officially end until March 20th, the noticeable increase in daylight hours in recent weeks has got me hoping warmer weather will soon be here.

In addition to family life and work obligations that help me fend off the winter blues, I am grateful to have ham radio and our club in my life to also add a little extra "daylight hours". Being involved in the club meetings and board meetings gives me something to look forward to especially in the period between Christmas and Easter. The planning required for fun, entertaining, and educational activities throughout the year for our club has given me focus and minimized my winter blues.

Thankfully, our club is blessed with board members that are up for the challenge of planning those events for this year and they are willing to step in where needed. Club Secretary Carl KC9HDS will be representing the club on March 11th at the Rotary Lights meeting in La Crescent. This is the time in which we collect our check for the volunteer work performed in the park following the opening night of Rotary Lights.

Board Member Rick KD9GVS will be coordinating our volunteer involvement in the St. Patrick's Day Parade in La Crosse on Saturday March 12th. Please respond to Rick's email invitation if you are willing to help out with this event.

On Sunday March 13th, Club Treasurer Drew AB9NE will be spearheading our participation in the Wisconsin QSO Party being held from 1 PM to 8 PM. Drew will be able to answer any questions you may have about this event at our upcoming club meeting on Tuesday March 1st.

Our March club meeting will include a presentation from Dan Goltz WK0W on the Ride the Ridges bicycle event held each year in Winona and the surrounding area. Dan and others in the Winona Amateur Radio Club handle the radio communications for this event. I'm expecting a very informative presentation from Dan and hope to see you at the meeting. Similar to February's meeting we will have an in person meeting but will also make it available as a Zoom meeting for those who don't feel comfortable attending in person.

Until then, 73 and keep hoping for warmer weather for this month's planned events.

Shawn KD9KGQ, RARC President



RIVERLAND AMATEUR RADIO CLUB

Monday, February 21, 2022 Board Meeting Minutes

Call to Order: 1837 All Board members were present.

» Approval of Minutes: Scott KB3MKD motion to approve, Roger KA9BKK 2nd, approved.

» Treasurer's Report:

Scott KB3MKD motion to approve, Roger KA9BKK 2nd, approved.

» Officer's Report:

Shawn KD9KGQ Texted Dan AB9TS about status of FT 857 panel repair. Panel arrived at repair site, nothing more yet.

» Committee Reports:

- Program presentation possibility=Heil microphone presentation. Checking into La Crosse Queen Pizza cruise \$25.00 per person to include XYLS. Pickup Rotary Lights Check at Corky's Pizza March 11 at 0700 Breakfast-Carl KC9HDS will attend.

» Old Business:

- Update on club's ARRL registration requirement (Carl) - Rick Kolter has agreed to assist because he is currently listed as the contact on ARRL website and has admin rights.
- Paid Zoom meeting subscription as a back-up for in person meeting?? With the club currently having access to UUF's Zoom account, the purchase of our own subscription has been put on hold. We have an approved motion from last month's board meeting to spend \$200 for the subscription. Should this approved motion be amended to further delay implementation for a period up to 12 months (after which the approved motion becomes null and void) to allow flexibility in enacting this approved motion if needed? Motion to approve Scott KB3MKD, Dave KB9EWG 2nd, Approved
- Review the club's constitution and standing rules, copy of current document to be reviewed by Tim Jacobson N9CD. Tim has not provided any recommendations to date. The club needs to move forward with changes without this input. Not yet reviewed by Tim N9CD. Will be reviewed and modified by Roger KA9BKK, Drew AB9NE, AND Carl KC9HDS.

Check and bereavement card and note delivered to Tom WB9BJQ.

» New Business:

- St. Patrick's Day Parade planning (Saturday March 12, 2022) – Rick Kolter KD9GVS will send emails to the membership looking for volunteers to help.



- Wisconsin QSO Party (Sunday March 13, 2022 1 PM to 8 PM) planning – Drew Neve AB9NE suggested operating mobile at this event from various counties to expand points total.
- MS Walk (Saturday, May 21, 2022) – Website volunteer portal is open, what needs to happen for our club's involvement? - Rick Kolter KD9GVS will contact for more info and registration.

Motion to adjourn: 1937 Dave KB9EWG, Scott KB3MKD

Monthly Program List

Dan Goltz, Coordination of Ride the Ridges Bike Event - March

Kevin Rindy, La Crosse County Emergency Management - April

Bill O'Driscoll (retired patent lawyer for Trane), radio related patents – May

Field Day Planning—June



Bereavement

To the family of Paulette O'Brien

On behalf of the en6re membership of the Riverland Amateur Radio Club, it is with great sadness to know that Paulette KD9QCG has become a silent key. All of those who have had the opportunity to have had a QSO with her would remember her cheerfulness and pleasant manner. We are sorry for your loss.

Gone, but not forgotten....

We present this memorial to her family to be used in her memory. 73's

Riverland Amateur Radio Club

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Onalaska, WI 54650



Looking back...

As I watched Scott kb3mkd's presentation Linux vs Windows, I couldn't help but think back to when I first got the "computer bug" and the kinds of computers that were available in that Jurassic period of home computing. When Scott outlined how Linux could work on a very small format and fairly primitive computer, I immediately thought of my first computer.

It was one of those simple Atari 400s. You know the one, it was the one with the "peanut butter proof" keyboard that was so popular at the time. When I got into home computing, I opted for the Atari 400 because, it fit my budget, was easy to use and my kids could not destroy it.

It came with a whopping 16K of RAM and used a program recorder to load in programs. It also had a cartridge slot that accommodated various preprogrammed cartridges. The cartridges came in a variety of configurations. Mostly games, but you could also get programming languages like Basic, Pilot, and Turtle that enabled one to program your own apps.


Oh yes, it was a very simple and in some ways, it was an ungainly beast. That keyboard that protected it from accidental spills and assorted goo that it would be subjected to when young children are using it, also made it difficult to do anything verging on touch typing.

Its relatively small RAM capacity also made it somewhat less than desirable for many uses, but it was cheap and nearly indestructible. It was a teaser of a computer. Once you started to get into its relatively simple complexities it became apparent that if you wanted to do much more than run cartridges it just wouldn't do.

The program recorder (a specialized cassette recorder) was a real pain if you wanted to load programs via it. A relatively simple and small program would take an extended period of time to load and often when you thought that your program had loaded successfully it would make a discouraging sound and inform you that an error had occurred as it tried to load. Most of the time, you needed to rewind the tape and try again. If you were lucky, the program would then load and you could run it. Otherwise it was time to try to debug your program to make it work.

This "system" cost \$450.00. It included in a package: The Atari 400 \$200.00, the program recorder \$100.00, a Basic language cartridge \$40.00, a couple of games also at \$40.00 each, a Joystick \$15.00, an operating manual \$15.00. this was a learning experience, as I bought this package right before Christmas that year as a surprise for my 3 kids. It was a learning experience in many ways as 2 months later, the \$200.00 computer was selling for \$65.00 and in the box was a \$50.00 rebate coupon! I determined at that point to be more careful about what and when I bought computer equipment.

As I said, I was outgrowing the Atari 400, so I looked at an Atari 1200XL with 64K of RAM and built in diagnostics and other nice features. It was selling locally for \$1000.00 without anything extra. So I waited and watched. A few months later I found one for sale in a want add in the paper for \$200.00 with a boat load of cartridges, a modem, 2 Joy sticks, and a Floppy Disc Drive! I bought it and was very happy with it for a long time. Especially since I got it so cheap. Later, I became involved with a computer store in the Twin Cities area and bought many different models of Atari computers for as little as \$15.00. But that is another story. I've learned a lot since then about all sorts of computers and am still fascinated by them. Computers are a great hobby, almost as wide and varied as Amateur Radio, but not nearly as much fun.

73 de Carl kc9hds. 

Presentation on Linux vs Windows

by Scott KB3MKD

This presentation was both informative and entertaining. Scott did a fine job of outlining the similarities and differences between Linux and Windows Operating Systems. Both Operating Systems have pros and cons. Some of the pros and cons are rather minor, but the main differences are rather stark in contrast.

For example: Windows has a wide base of usage and a very loyal clientele, where as Linux is has a smaller base, but its operating system requires less space to load and less memory to operate than Windows. For those who have little or no technical ability, Windows may be more attractive, but if you have an older computer with less resources and capability, Linux might be a better fit for you.

In the past Linux was a rather difficult OS to deal with because in its infancy it was more technically demanding, but since it is an open source OS it is much easier to modify to the needs of an individual than Windows. Unlike Windows, there aren't many viruses out there to plague the average user, and since so many of the apps that are usable on Linux are readily available for free, it is an ever growing OS with increasing capabilities.

Granted that there are so many commercially available pre-packed programs all ready established for Windows, it does seem that Windows is a superior choice for many. However, most of those pre-packaged programs are expensive and the updates for them are often also costly, the open source nature of Linux is attractive indeed, since many of the apps for it are free, easy to use, and modifiable. Another advantage with Linux is that it is inherently more secure since it is a more compact OS it has fewer security holes in it than Windows has.

Time and space do not allow an in depth description of the intricacies of either of these OSs, suffice it to say that it might be a good idea to check out Linux as an alternative to Windows for your daily usage, especially if your needs are not met by the standard apps available with Windows.

Hams tend to be tinkerers and Linux will undoubtedly be much more amenable to those who like to modify things to suit their individual needs. It might just be the ticket to a more usable situation for many in the radio community as well as the general public. It is so compact that it can be loaded and used on small computer systems like Raspberry PI and other dedicated small capacity systems. The possibilities of Linux's use seems to be limited only by your individual imagination and willingness to explore its capabilities.

Scott did a very good job of putting the pluses of Linux in simple terms that anyone could understand and his visual examples of how Linux works were very compelling indeed. The Q&A session that followed his presentation was helpful as well. If you want more info about this presentation, you can watch the YouTube video of his presentation that is available on line.

You might find that Linux is worth the time that it takes to discover more about it and how it can be used. In the meantime, I'll be saying 73 de Carl kc9hds.



Hamud Faal Search

Hamud Faal, 25, was reported missing by his family Feb. 21. He was last seen on Front Street near Jay Street on the 20th. He is a UWL student studying to be a psychologist.



On Saturday, February 26, a search was organized to try to find him. Several members of the RARC participated in the search. 📻



RARC General Meeting

Tuesday February 1, 2022

Call to Order: 1907 Viewed via Zoom with some members present at the UUC.

We Introduced Ourselves to New Members / Attendees: 11 via Zoom plus 6 present at UUC.

Moment of Silence for Silent Keys:

- Paulette O'Brien KB9QGC.

Dan AB9TS lead the membership in "The Hams Prayer."

Upcoming Events:

- VE Session on Saturday February 12, 2022.
- St. Patrick's Day Parade on Saturday March 12, 2022. (Rick Kolter) Those interested in helping, contact Rick KD9GVS.
- Wisconsin QSO Party on Sunday March 13, 2022. (Drew Neve AB9NE) Report= 1300 to 2000 more info later.

Sign Up Sheets:

St. Patrick's Day Parade.

Entertain New Business Prior to Presentation: New Newsletter Editor=Scott KB3MKD.

Note: A video of this meeting will be on YouTube thanks to David KB9EWG.

Introduce Presenter:

- Scott Cross KB3MKD gave us a Linux vs. Windows side by side comparison of the two operating systems. Details in this month's "The Key" newsletter.

Next Month's Program:

- Dan Goltz – Ride the Ridges presentation at our March 1, 2022 club meeting.

Adjourn: 1945



UPCOMING Events for February 2022

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


March 6, 2022	Shawn kd9kgq
March 13, 2022	Mark kb9ofk
March 20, 2022	Rick kd9gvs
March 27, 2022	Wayne k0wlo

- ♦ **Saturday** morning Rag chew, weekly on the 146.970 repeater, 8:00-9:00 AM.
- ♦ **March 1...**Program Night: Dan Goltz WK0W presentation on the Ride to Ridges bicycle event in Winona
- ♦ **March 12...**St Patricks Day Parade. Contact Rick KD9GVS rckolter@gmail.com to volunteer
- ♦ **March 13...**Wisconsin QSO party. Contact Drew AB9NE ab9ne@yahoo.com for details
- ♦ **March 21...**Trustee Meeting, Time: 6:30 PM, Onalaska Perkins. All members are welcome to attend.



BUY-SELL-TRADE-ISO

* Send your Amateur related classified ad(s) to Scott, NLT noon the 26th of each month to kb3mkd@arrl.net

Editor's Note: A big thank you to Kelley KD9LQW for her work in putting the Key together every month for the last few years. I have some big shoes to fill. 

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 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
- * 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 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 Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, 401 West Avenue in La Crosse.
- * Weekly "Breakfast Club" 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 2022 Board of Trustees and contact information.

President.....Shawn Hicks, KD9KGQ Email...eistim68@gmail.com

Vice-President.....David Peters, KB9EWG Email...kb9ewg@gmail.com

Secretary.....Carl Thurston, KC9HDS Email...kc9hds@gmail.com

Treasurer.....Drew Neve, AB9NE Email...ab9ne@yahoo.com

Trustee.....Scott Cross, KB3MKD Email...kb3mkd@arrl.net

Trustee.....Rick Kolter KD9GVS Email rckolter@gmail.com

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