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## What's Next?

It seems to me that we have survived so many things of late. Besides the one big elephant in the room that I need not name, we have literally weathered the many storms that have come our way: i.e. Field Day's torrential rains that threatened to wash us out, plus we have had to deal with various issues with equipment both foreseen and unforeseen, and a myriad of other things that have vexed many of us and drove a few of us close to the edge. The list of these things in retrospect, looks longer than one would expect. In spite of all that has happened in the last several months we have managed to pull through.

The way ahead is much rosier now, but we still need to be wary of the potential of more mishaps. Don't get me wrong, I am not suggesting that we hide our heads in the sand and hope that all of those bad things just go away. Far from it, our experiences with adversity have made us much more resilient than we were before. It is obvious that we are better able to deal with what ever happens than we were a year or two ago.

Oh yes, there are those among us who are trying to paint things blacker than they are, that is unfortunate, but unavoidable. Some will say that we can't possibly make things better because we have tried all of the things that have been suggested and having failed with them in the past, for us to try them again would just be an exercise in futility. But we must look at the suggestions that are being made and listen carefully to what is being said and keep an open mind to new ideas even if at first we might think that they are just old ideas rewarmed.

We are at a time where we are seeing more and more new Hams coming into our club that have not seen things not work out as intended, because they are new and don't have the experience resulting from such failures. They come to us with new ideas that they haven't yet tried and are hopeful that a good out come will result.

Us older Hams who have seen many attempts to make improvements to the way that things go in our club and our hobby, need to be ready to help these new Hams with their new ideas and wend their way through the reefs and shoals that we know are there and help them to be better Hams. By doing so, so shall we be better Hams as well.

Our club and its approach to the betterment of our hobby is far from perfect. There are many things that could be done to make our club batter at serving our community and our selves. In addition to perfecting our equipment, we need to be more familiar with how that equipment works. Find the flaws in our operation and make improvements in our equipment and our selves.

73 de KC9HDS, Carl  
(member, & contributor)



## PRESIDENTS COMMENTS

Greetings Club Members,

2021 has flown by so far for me, seemingly faster than ever! It's been a busy year for the RARC which is a good thing. Most major events we participate in have wound down for the year. November's Club meeting topic is yet to be determined, but please remember that December is an important month as we will be taking nominations for Executive Board members for the upcoming year.

- Our next program night meeting will be October 5<sup>th</sup> at 6:30pm and will be held at Greg Miller's home QTH at W7755 A. Johnson Road where the Club trailer will be on display. The purpose is to gather thoughts on improvements and/or additions to the trailer. There has been a trailer improvement committee formed as of late consisting of RARC executive board members, and any input from Club members is welcome. One other important thing to note is hopefully by the October Club meeting we will have a Club shirt sample to "show and tell" and take orders from Club members.
- Remember that the RARC Club e-mail "reflector" is out there for all Club members to post an announcement, information, or question related to Ham radio. The address is [members@rarc.qth.com](mailto:members@rarc.qth.com).
- Also remember the Saturday morning "ragchew" on the 146.970 repeater at 8:00 AM.
- Just a reminder if you have any submissions for the Club Newsletter, The Key, please send them to our editor, Kelley Becker at [kellyLL23@hotmail.com](mailto:kellyLL23@hotmail.com).
- Keep the RARC in mind for your on-line purchases. 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 

## Scenery, Bicycles and Ham Radio

“Scenic” can be beautiful for your Sunday drive but “scenic” for bicyclists means hills, horrible hills, and “scenic” for Amateur Radio operators providing communication for a bicycle ride means dead spots and poor RF. “Scenic” describes the Winona Rotary Club’s Ride The Ridges bicycle tour, Sept. 18, and it describes the challenges for three Riverland Amateur Radio Club operators that volunteered to help with the ride.

Shawn Hicks, KC9KGQ, Rick Kolter, KD9GVS, Bob Seaquist, W9LSE and the '97 repeater were part of the Winona Amateur Radio Club crew supporting Ride The Ridges and its 500 participants. Members of the Winona club were the foundation of communication support as they have for six or seven years. “The help of all the Radio Club members was instrumental in making the ride a huge success,” said ride coordinator Mike Bernatz.

Communication coverage required 20 Amateur Radio operators, some of whom rode 200-300 miles in SAG vehicles providing service. In addition to SAG units, there were two net control operators (NCS), a number of Hams stationed at rest stops, a Ham at the Winona Middle School, a couple Hams that served as floaters and one Ham helping the ride coordinator.

Ride The Ridges is a fund raiser for the Winona Rotary with money supporting many of that organization’s charities. The bicycle tour is sought by riders for its scenic beauty, Autumn colors, great organization and great support.

There are four different routes ranging in distance from 26 to 106 miles contained in a triangle between Winona, La Crescent and Rushford, Minnesota. Bicycles all start and finish at the Winona Middle School but routes diverge; many families with children pedal the short, 26 mile, route and some ambitious riders cruise the full 106 mile route. All are challenged by hills and rewarded by swooping, twisty downhills. Most riders do not recall many level stretches.

Communications requires planning because the Driftless Area geography—short, steep valleys—makes an RF coverage map look like Swiss cheese. Cell phones become useless and even Minnesota’s public service ARMER system has dead zones. Amateur Radio systems are better because they use two very good Winona repeaters, the 146.835, near Bluff Siding, WI, and the 442.150 near Witoka, MN as well as the 146.97 Riverland repeater high above La Crescent.

But wait, there’s more! At the far western edge of the route at Rushford a cross-band radio was needed to repeat the Witoka signal. Ride The Ridges is a challenge for radio operators but the carefully planned solution by Erik Brom, WB0NIU, worked flawlessly. Radio signals were carefully checked two weeks before the tour.

Radio Lead Dan Goltz, WK0W, repeatedly reminded operators that they are communicators so Amateur Radio was supplemented by cell phones and a number of Winona County ARMER public service radios.

Riders were given an emergency phone number to call if they required assistance and that was managed by Lance Tagliapietra, AD0UT, who was located at the ride’s start and finish point at the Winona Middle School. He took calls from a number of distressed riders, and got the appropriate response going. “In some cases we talked to the person multiple times to assure them help was on the way,” said WB0NIU. There was a large screen display at the middle school with ride routes overlaid on an APRS display so members of the public could visualize ride logistics as well as follow the sweep “clean” the routes.

ARMER units connected the ride with Winona’s Law Enforcement Center, the sheriff’s SOAR Team (Search Operations Assistance and Rescue), various first responder units and the National Weather Service.


Another communications aid for the event was APRS (Automated Packet Radio System) that was active in all moving units such as the SAGs (rider support and aid vehicles), the ride director’s truck and the sweep truck at the very, very end. The net control (NCS) tracked all the moving pieces on APRS so dispatching units was more convenient. Depending on where a mobile unit was located on the large course it could be using one of three repeaters or the

cross-band radio that connected to one of the repeaters. The NCS knew which of the three repeaters to use to call a unit because Yaesu radios report which voice frequency is used on each mobile unit.

There were Bloedow's famous, delicious donuts at rest stops. Ask Shawn. He helped at a rest stop near Mound Prairie feeding and hydrating riders. Or ask Rick and Bob; Rick was in a SAG assisting riders with flat tires and mechanical issues—occasionally refueling himself at rest stops. Bob was with the ride coordinator also checking on rest stops.

Bloedow's cake donuts were light, airy and extremely flavorful. An important communication duty was to report when a rest stop closed so its food could be moved further down the course.

Many of the bicycle riders came from significant distances to participate, and uniformly, they were lavish with their praise. "Many of them thanked us (and by reference all of the volunteers) for putting on a good event," noted WBONIU.

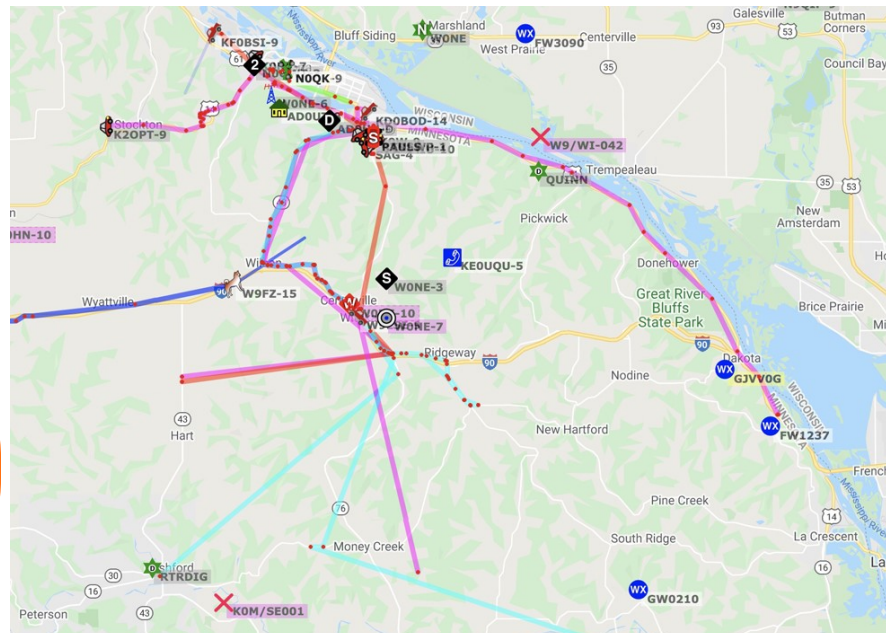
73 de W9LSE, Bob Sequist  
(member, & contributor) 



Above: Bicycle riders enjoy the beauty of the Driftless Area on Ride The Ridges.

Above: Rick Kolter, KD9GVS, pictured in 2017 when he provided radio communication in a Ride The Ridges SAG vehicle. Ride The Ridges.

Right: APRS.FI offers a hint of the APRS activity for the Ride The Ridges bicycle tour. APRS showed the position of moving units and it told the NCS what voice repeater the units were using at the time.



## I wonder....

I wonder what a world without radio would be like. No I'm not talking about the time before radio was brought on line (I didn't say invented, as there is a lot of controversy over who, when, and where radio as we know it was invented, so let's not go there). I'm talking about what our current world would be like without radio. We like to think of ourselves as being into "High Tech," but where would we be if not for radio? To envision a world where there is no radio is not as far fetched as you might think. Oh yes, there are a lot of things that we feel that we could not live without that would suddenly no longer exist. The list of things that are based on radio is a very long list indeed. Imagine there is no radio. Imagine what our world would be without it. Imagine how different things would be by its absence. It takes a lot to imagine such a situation. The many things that we depend on that are a result of radio is truly daunting.

But let's suppose that you find yourself in a place where there is no radio, say a deserted island in the middle of an ocean. What would you do? Would you fall down on the ground in despair because you had no radio? Would you try to make a radio out of found objects so that you could communicate with the world beyond your island? Would it really matter that you had no radio? Would your survival be the main daily motive of your existence?

Think back if you can to a television series that was popular many years ago. Some of you may not remember it. Some of you perhaps, weren't even born yet when it was on TV. The series that I'm referring to was very popular in its day, it was called "Gilligan's Island." For those of you who are not familiar with this series, it is a story of a group of people who are marooned on an island when their boat ran aground in a storm. The members of this group were of a wide back ground of experience, education and skills. They had little in common other than their sudden and perplexing situation. The result of their plight was both comical and thought provoking as they tried time and again to escape from that island and go back to their previous lives. If you can remember this show, you will also remember that one of the characters was a "Professor," a man of many talents who was able to make all sorts of devices from the objects found on that island. They did have a radio, but it was damaged and of little use. Eventually, the "Professor" was able to get it working and they were rescued, but that took a long time and doesn't help much with our imagined radio less island.

Anyway, think of yourself marooned on an island without a radio. Some might find this situation refreshing, especially if you normally find yourself bombarded with high volume, unwanted radio broadcasts coming from passing cars. I would guess that you would get used to it, not having a radio, but this isn't what I driving at either.

Suppose that all radio type devices ceased to exist, or became totally useless do to some atmospheric disturbance. What would you do? Can there be modern life without these devices? Would we all revert to a cave man like existence? I don't know about how you feel about this but I would find it hard to adapt to such a situation. It is inconceivable for something like this to happen, but if it did, what would you do? Think about it! Can we possibly survive without all of our usual radio related devices?

Probably yes, but what quality of existence would we have? I confess that I don't have a nice neat answer to this, but then that is not the point. My point is this. Is radio so necessary to our daily existence that we can't do without it? Or is it something that we could do without if we had to? I leave it to you to answer this. To me, radio is a luxury that I'd be hard pressed to live without. How about you? I leave you with the Ham's prayer I'm a Ham and I can transmit, if I have to, I guess!

73 de KC9HDS, Carl

(member, & contributor)



# RIVERLAND AMATEUR RADIO CLUB

## Monday, September 20, 2021 Board Meeting Minutes



Meeting was called to order at 6:41 PM virtually on Zoom.

**Officers Present:** Rick KD9GVS, Carl KC9HDS, Drew AB9NE, Dave KB9EWG, Steve W9DXE, and Shawn KD9KGQ.

**Approval of August 2021 minutes:** Approval of August 2021 minutes: Minutes were approved as submitted in the Newsletter.

**Treasurer's Report:** Drew made the Treasurers report, and it was approved.

**Officer's Reports:** None.

**Committee Reports:** Trailer committee – Carl reports that there has been a couple of things added to the trailer and a date should be scheduled so members can go through the trailers to see what the committee needs to address. Drew has made and donating a power cable to keep wit the trailer. Carl has started conversations with the VFW to see if the RARC can negotiate storage space to keep the trailer.

### Old Business:

- Newsletter Articles – for “The Key” should be sent to Kelley by the 26<sup>th</sup> of the month to make it into the newsletter.
- Club Shirts – prototype still being produced by Ad Concepts for review at October meeting hopefully.

### New Business:

- November Program Night meeting – Steve, W9DXE will check with Rich, W9TIT to scheduled to do a show and tell of his projects, and it will be at the normal meeting place of the UU building on West Avenue across from Aquinas High School.
- Drew, AB9NE, reports that he got an email from the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship that they are changing their occupancy rules to what the CDC color charts guidelines are. The colors reflect the limitations on the building's occupancy will be at the time of each month's meeting.

Motion to Adjourn @ 7:15 PM

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

## UPCOMING Events for October 2021

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

October 3, 2021	Rick kd9gvs
October 10, 2021	Wayne k0wlo
October 17, 2021	Shawn kd9kgq
October 24, 2021	Mark kb9ofk
October 31, 2021	Rick kd9gvs

- ◆ Saturday morning Ragchew, weekly on the 146.970 repeater, 8:00-9:00 AM
- ◆ **October 5...**Program Night: See President's Comments on page 2 for details.
- ◆ **October 18...**Trustee Meeting, Time: 06:30 PM, Onalaska Perkins. All members are welcome to attend.



### BUY-SELL-TRADE-ISO

- For Sale: Boafeng UV-82X HT,. 2m (136-174 mhz) & 1.25m (220-260 mhz). Excellent condition w/org box, charger, ear bud mic, & antenna. Asking \$20. Call/text Steve W9DXE at 608-487-5810.
- For Sale: Boafeng UV-B5 HT,. 2m/440m. Very good condition w/org box, charger, ear bud mic, manual, newer battery & antenna. Asking \$15. Call/text Steve W9DXE at 608-487-5810.
- For Sale: Astron 7 amp power supply, good overall condition. Good for 40 watt or less output transceivers. Asking \$15. Call/text Steve W9DXE at 608-487-5810.

\* Send your Amateur related classified ad to Kelley, NLT the 26th of each month to [kelleyLL23@hotmail.com](mailto:kelleyLL23@hotmail.com).

## 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 Crosse, 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 2021 Board of Trustees and contact information.**

President.....Rick Kolter, KD9GVS Email...rckolter@gmail.com

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

Secretary.....Ron Severson, KD9OHQ Email...ronaldhseverson54@gmail.com

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

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

Trustee.....Steve Becker, W9DXE Email...sbecker54656@yahoo.com

Repeater Trustee.....Shawn Hicks, KD9KGQ Email...eistim68@gmail.com

Newsletter Editor.....Kelley Becker, KD9LQW Email...kelleyLL23@hotmail.com