

THE KEY

Official Journal of The Riverland Amateur Radio Club



The Riverland Amateur Radio Club is a Special Service Club affiliated with the American Radio Relay League. The club is active in community service as well as actively promoting Amateur Radio in the Coulee Region. The Club is open to all who are interested in Amateur Radio and will help unlicensed persons become licenses thru the FCC.

KB9EWG

**Riverland
Amateur Radio
Club**
P.O. Box 621
Onalaska, WI.
54636

Repeater
146.970 PL 131.8

RARC Net
8:00 PM Sunday
night on the
146.970 Repeater

Club Meetings
Trustee Meeting
3rd Monday of the
month at King
Street Kitchen at
5:00 PM, all club
members are
welcome.

Program evening is
1st Tuesday of the
month at 7:00 PM,
Gunderson Clinic
conference room 1
in the lower level.



Well organized and well used, that's what every Ham Shack should be like. A very good example of one is this shack owned and used by Dave Peters, KB9EWG. I for one was very impressed with Dave's accomplishments when it comes to his dedication to pursuing the hobby. As Dave approached me at the RARC Swapfest with a loose leaf binder in hand which was full of different awards he has earned over the years from ARRL Elmer Award to Grid Square Awards to WAS to DXCC Hunters Award and the list goes on.

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September came and September went, what beautiful weather for getting some of that badly needed antenna and other outside work done. Soon it will be getting colder and the antenna work will not be fun anymore. So now is the time to get after it so come the cold winds from the north you can be warm inside the house and sitting in front of the radio and making that long sought after rare DX contact, all because you planned ahead. Now if I could heed these words and get to work. I usually end up standing out in the cold because something quite working just as the snow starts to fly. Sound familiar? I am sure I am not the only one who has procrastinated to long and did not plan ahead for the breakdown. So heed my early warning and see what you can do to prepare. If something is beyond your expertise, put out a call for some help. There should be other ham's that would gladly lend a hand.

Riverland Amateur Radio Club
PO Box 621
Onalaska, WI 54650

President.....Kevin Holcomb, KC9ZGD
Vice-President.....Dan Abts, AB9TS
Secretary.....Rick Kolter, KD9GVS
Treasurer.....Greg Miller, K9LEC
Trustee.....Carl Thurston, KC9HDS
Trustee.....Roger Reader, KA9BKK
Trustee.....Bill Wood, KE9XQ
Newsletter Editor.....Greg Miller, K9LEC

The Key is published monthly and e-mailed to members and friends of the Riverland Amateur Radio Club. Address any correspondence to: Greg Miller at k9lec@arrl.net.

Visit our website at rarc.qth.com



Last test session for 2017

November 11

Register 5 days in advance with Roger Reader, KA9BKK, 608-783-0723 or readers@centurtytel.net.

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I paged thru this binder at both the Swapfest and the clubs program night and thoroughly enjoyed the various QSL cards he had from every where you could think of. Dave can be proud of what he has accomplished with the hobby and I am sure he will not stop there. Dave has really gotten into the digital phase of Amateur Radio as the list of awards proves out. What really intrigued me was the modest antenna system he uses in his shack, and I mean shack. Strung across the ceiling is a slinky dipole, goes from room to room but obviously does a very good job for him. Out side strapped to a clothes line pole is a vertical antenna. Everything seems to work just fine as the awards continue to pile up. Dave is a good example of a Ham Operator that not only utilizes his shack but does a good job at it. If you get a chance take a look at his accomplishments, it just might inspire you to get going yourself.



Lost Again

by Carl Thurston kc9hds

After so many times it should be expected that when the "Hapless Ham" takes some Ham friends down to the Circus City Swap Meet in Baraboo, somewhere along the way he gets lost. This happened several years ago when he had a car full of Hams going there and upon arrival it became evident that no one in the car actually knew where the event was to take place. It was assumed that the Circus City Swap Meet would be held at the Fair Grounds as it had been for many years, but no, not that time. After driving around without finding it for some time, it was decided that perhaps a service station attendant would know where it was located. Wrong! Not only did he not know where it was, he didn't even know what it was or what Hams where either. One of the Hams suggested that we try calling on 2 meters, perhaps someone at the Swap Meet would be on the air to guide in stragglers, but only dead air was found. Not to be totally devoid of something to do, it was decided that they would go down to "Delay's Salvage" instead, so they did. It wasn't as Ham oriented as a Swap Meet would have been but it was something to fill in the time before lunch and heading home. Not to be too embarrassed by all this, the "Hapless Ham" made the best of it and no one else seemed to care very much as they were able to save money that would have been spent on radio related items that they probably could have lived without anyway.

That was several years ago. More recently the annual journey to Circus City was fraught with other problems. One time while using a GPS unit to guide them there, as they neared the location the GPS unit went blank and they had to rely on the old "seat of the pants" method to find their way there, but they did arrive, even if they weren't able to be there at the start.

This time, the "Hapless Ham" was relying on "Google Maps" on his iPhone to guide them there. Circus City Swap Meet was entered into his iPhone, but he didn't notice until way too late that he had selected the route to Circus City Sports Field instead of Circus City Swap Meet. The result was that by the time that it was realized that they were on the wrong track, they were really lost. Not having a fold up map in the car was another failure, with no back up plan, they had to resort to the use of a cell phone to call the Ticket Counter at the Circus City Swap meet to get directions to the event. Even then it wasn't easy as they were so far off the proper route that it took some extra time for them to get back to where they could get to the right route to get to the event. Finally after much driving around in circles, they arrived about 30 minutes after the event started.

Upon arrival, they were greeted with the comment at the Ticket Counter, "Oh, so you are the lost Hams from La Crosse! Finally made it hah!" Not too bad after all, at least they made it. Paid their entry fees and received their tickets and entered the drawing. Seeing some other Hams from La Crosse they went over to talk to them and as they were standing around, the "Hapless Ham's" Call sign was called out as a winner. Observing that he never won anything that he could use, the "Hapless Ham" went over to the awards table to receive his award, and it was 2 tickets to a Swap Meet at Heurbutus in October. Obviously it was something that neither he nor anyone else that he knew could use so he gave it back to be raffled off once more to some one else. It wasn't a total loss though as the "Hapless Ham" did find several items that he bought. He even found something for his XYL that she might like. After the Circus City Swap Meet the group went to "Delaney's Salvage," where they all found something to buy, after that they stopped for lunch before heading back home having spent a fairly successful day.

It should be noted that when ever the "Hapless Ham" decides to take a car full of Hams anywhere, there is always the possibility that he will get lost. Knowing this, the Hams who accompany him are always prepared to be lost on the way at least once. So they think to themselves, "Lost again!"

RIVERLAND AMATEUR RADIO CLUB

Monday Sept 18 , 2017 Executive Meeting

MINUTES

Call to order: 5:04 pm

Members Present : Kevin Holcomb KC9ZGD, Greg Miller K9LEC, Roger Reader KA9BKK, Dan Abts AB9TS, Carl Thurston KC9HDS, Rick Kolter KD9GVS

Approval of Minutes: August minutes approved without comment.

Treasurer's Report: Monthly report available upon request from Greg, K9LEC.

Committee Reports:

Greg, K9LEC, has reserved the Omni Center once again for the 2018 Swap Fest.

Dan, AB9TS, will attend a meeting coming up to finalize the Club's involvement in the Rotary Lights parade for 2017.

Old Business:

The Dell mainframe computer in Tom WB9BJQ's possession has been recycled.

Keith Butler has been confirmed on the agenda for the October program night.

New Business:

Rick, KD9GVS to add question on membership renewal letters asking about ARRL membership, and also will contact "Kling Designs" to see what they can offer regarding Club apparel.

An informational flyer was passed around regarding the upcoming "HRO Superfest" Sept 29 and 30.

Roger, KA9BKK will pick up a new storage tote for the Secretary's use in storing documents.

Motion to Adjourn : 6:00 pm.

PROGRAM NIGHT

Program night for the Month of October will be held at the Conference Room 1 in the Gunderson Clinic (our normal meeting location) on Tuesday October 3 at 7:00 PM. We will have a guest speaker by the name of Keith Butler, LaCrosse County Emergency Coordinator. He will be discussing ARES/RACES and emergency communications as related to Amateur Radio. This should be a very interesting discussion especially after the recent events over the last month. See you there.

SILENT KEY

Richard "Dick" Kleppe, K0MNN, of La Crescent passed away Sunday, Sept. 24, 2017. Dick may have been better known to some as K0KTP. Dick was a past member of the Riverland ARC and was involved with the Tri-State Repeater Association when the repeater was turned over to the RARC. Dick will be missed by all Ham's who knew him.

ARRL finally realizes status quo isn't going to cut it

By Dan Romanchik, KB6NU

An item in the July 2017 ARRL board meeting caught my attention. It notes that a committee of staff members was tasked with identifying the challenges facing ARRL and possible solutions. The August 3, 2017 issue of the ARRL Letter ran the following report:

"ARRL Chief Executive Officer Tom Gallagher, NY2RF, presented the report of six Headquarters staffers who had been tasked with identifying the challenges facing ARRL and devising feasible solutions. Specifically, the committee addressed market research findings that have continued to reveal that only a small percentage of new hams join the League, and only about one-half of new hams actually get on the air.

"The committee began with the premise that ARRL must act in order to remain relevant going forward. It proposed instituting a Lifelong Learning Program to focus on developing a clear developmental path for all radio amateurs, from newcomers to established radio amateurs. The committee recommended the creation of new programs and services to increase the knowledge base of newcomers in order to get them active, as well as programs to keep experienced amateurs up to date with changing technology and practice."

The board meeting minutes were a little more detailed:

"Mr. Roderick yielded the floor to CEO Gallagher who presented the report of a committee of staff members tasked with identifying the challenges facing ARRL and possible solutions. The members of the committee - Diane Petrilli, KB1RNF; Norm Fusaro, W3IZ; Becky Schoenfeld, W1BXY; Debra Jahnke, K1DAJ; Steve Ford, WB8IMY; and Sean Kutzko, KX9X, joined the meeting at 9:20 AM, to present this report. Their findings show the importance to ARRL of getting newly licensed hams actively on the air and how that relates to continued growth of the organization. In order to achieve that goal, the committee proposed developing a lifelong learning department, which would address the needs of all amateurs with the focus being on developing a clear knowledge path for all amateurs. They proposed creating straightforward programs and services to enhance the knowledge base of new amateurs as well as to enhance their sense of community within the hobby.

Another recommendation involved refocusing the priorities of the emergency preparedness department to address the current trends in public service.

"A third recommendation was to improve the value proposition of membership. The committee proposed doing a survey, which would include test material that is targeted to the interests of newer hams. The content would include a strong emphasis on serving communities, agencies, and partners; digital communications, and human interest. Projects would be simple. The survey would obtain information on new ham's interests and needs in the hobby. The survey would also try to determine the delivery system that might best meet the newcomer's desire for receiving this type information (print, digital, messaging, etc). The test material is proposed to be delivered to recipients in fall 2017.

"From the committee's vantage point, the status quo is no longer adequate: we need to have a vision of the future and convey it to our current membership. If we do not convey the need to change the paradigm, the ARRL's relevancy will not move forward."

The good thing here is that the ARRL finally realizes that there are some serious problems. I've written about these in the past. I've challenged the ARRL to set a membership goal of 25% of the licensed amateurs in the U.S (<http://www.kb6nu.com/arrl-membership-is-25-asking-too-much/>). I've also encouraged the ARRL to play a bigger part in emergency communications research (<http://www.kb6nu.com/go-big-go-early-go-fast-smart/>).

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Unfortunately, it appears that the ARRL is approaching this issue in typical ARRL fashion. That is, working on these issues in their little cocoon in Newington and then issuing these statements as if they expect everyone to just fall in line. I quote, "From the committee's vantage point, the status quo is no longer adequate: we need to have a vision of the future and convey it to our current membership." That approach is doomed to failure. Any "visioning" or strategic planning that doesn't get the membership involved right from the start just isn't going to work.

The ARRL HQ staff just doesn't have the horsepower to pull this off properly. The staff is already pretty bare bones, and they still have to publish QST every month, keep Log-book of the World running, process thousands of license applications, etc., etc. The only way this is going to be a fruitful effort is if they get members—and lots of them—involved in this process.

If you agree with me, please let your director know. Contact your director and tell him that you want to be involved. The status quo of having the HQ staff not working with the membership "is no longer adequate." That's how we got here in the first place.

Dan, KB6NU, is the author of the "No Nonsense" amateur radio license study guides and blogs about amateur radio at KB6NU.Com. You can email him at cwgeek@kb6nu.com.

