

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.

Winter Field Day—Riverland Amateur RC Style



**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,
Gundersen Clinic
conference room 1
in the lower level.

It was not the best conditions for operating but the club members where able to setup and make a few contacts, so the members and the radios got some exercise. Members participating this year was Dan AB9TS, Rick KD9GVS, John KD9FDX (pictured left to right), Carl KC9HDS, Roger KA9BKK, Art W0JDC and Greg K9LEC.

HEATHKIT NIGHT

Are you a new ham or an old timer that remembers the smell of solder burning from a Heathkit being assembled in your home? I remember that smell as my dad would be assembling some type of Heathkit, mostly ham related. Either way you might enjoy our next club program night coming up on March 7 at the Gundersen Clinic in Conference Room1. We will go back in time to those Heathkit Days as Roger Reader , KA9BKK gives us a Heathkit Tour. So come and learn something about this very important part of electronics history. Got a Heathkit setting on your shelf? Dust it off and bring it along for all to see.

Most of us Hams have acquired Amateur Radio equipment over the years, me probably more than most. This is because I inherited my dad's ham radio shack. He was very active in building and using Heathkit. So setting on my shelf is an SB303 receiver and a SB401 transmitter along with various other Heathkit items. In all he built 40 kits. Now here is my mistake, I have let this equipment set way to long while I have been enjoying my Yaesu 867GX. At this years Winter Field Day I thought it would be fun to pull out these radios and fire them up, but no luck as the receiver would not pull in a signal. After two nights of dusting off and cleaning contacts as well as repairing the tuning dial it perked back up and is now working. The moral of the story is keep that equipment active or it will get stiff and refuse to fire up, just like me as I get older.

**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



Testing for new Ham's or upgrades for 2017 will be on the following dates:

- April 1
- June 3
- August 5 (Swapfest)
- September 9
- November 11

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

Presidents Frequency Modulation From Kevin Holcomb KC9ZGD

Greeting to you all! As we push through this new year, many things have changed and will continue to change over time. We have our first three events coming up which includes the St. Patrick's day parade on March 11, the MS walk on April 29th, and the Grandad half marathon on May 6th. If you're interested in helping out for any of the events, doing radio support and some traffic control, please let me know by emailing me at KC9ZGD@Yahoo.com or calling/texting me at 608-797-2975.

We are also into the new style of general club meetings in that we have a different program for each month, additionally we will have field trips planned out from time to time. This year we will be having our club picnic again along with field day and our very own swap fest in August. There will be plenty to do and hopefully some projects such as building antennas, working on the club trailer, and many other fun activities.

Also as a good reminder, please try and participate on the Sunday night net, but also monitor the repeater. We have it, why not use it. We can talk with our fellow hams (buddies) by dusting off the coax and making use of our equipment. Hope to hear you all on the air and 73 for now.

Why are there so many Techs?

By Dan Romanchik, KB6NU

Recently, one of my readers asked, "Why do most people have a Technician license and not a General or Extra? Is it simply not interesting enough to get more privileges?"

This is a very interesting question, one that I've written about before. I think there are several issues at play here. In no particular order:

It's pretty easy to get a Tech license, so a lot of people get them just for the challenge, but really never intend to use the license.

Some people get a Tech license, but then find out that amateur radio isn't what they thought it was going to be.

Some people get a Tech license, then can't find an Elmer to help them. They lose interest and give up on ham radio.

Some people get a Tech license, buy an HT, and think that's all there is to amateur radio. They quickly lose interest in amateur radio, because talking on the repeaters just isn't all that interesting.

Some people get licenses to participate in local emergency communications or CERT organizations. There's no need for them to get anything more than a Tech license.

Since it's so easy to get a Tech license, even those that aren't technically inclined get them. Getting a General Class license requires a fair amount of study, and because they don't see the benefits of putting in that kind of work, they just don't bother.

I posted this question to my blog and got several interesting replies. Perhaps the most cogent was by Kenneth, W6KWF. He wrote: "The only thing General/Extra gets you is HF, which is becoming an increasingly small fraction of the possibilities of the amateur hobby. Amateurs could easily spend their whole lives moving from FM repeaters to microwave to VHF packet to EME to CERT/event support, etc, etc, without having any interest to explore what few facets of the hobby need HF privileges."

I think this is a great point. When incentive licensing was put into place in the late 1960s, HF was where the action was. Nowadays, more of the "cool stuff" is happening on VHF, UHF and microwaves. Getting additional HF privileges is not really a big deal anymore for many hams.

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Yet another new license class?

Right on the heels of this discussion, the ARRL posted a news item, "ARRL Seeks Opinions Concerning Possible New Entry Level License" (<http://www.arrl.org/news/arrl-seeks-opinions-concerning-possible-new-entry-level-license>). According to this report, the ARRL Board of Directors set up an An Entry Level License Committee in September 2016.

The committee is gathering member input via an online member survey (<http://www.arrl.org/license-1>) and will make recommendations to the Board for possible rules changes to submit to the FCC. They note, "The result could mean changes to the Technician license, but it could also be an additional, but simpler, license with privileges that would give a newcomer a taste of most facets of ham radio from HF to VHF and UHF. The survey will be online until April 7, 2017.

According to the survey page, the committee is trying to address several issues, including:

The declining population of new hams under the age of 30.

A decline in the number of new licensees who actually get on the air.

Amateur Radio's lack of appeal for those under the age of 30, compared to other technical hobbies.

The increasing challenge of engaging and retaining Technician licensees.

A reluctance in much of the amateur community to embrace newer technologies of interest to the younger segment of the population.

Personally, I don't think that coming up with a new entry-level license class with privileges that are even more limited than the Technician Class is a bad idea, but whether or not it's successful will depend completely on the implementation. Unless the new class of license is accompanied by some kind of program that will help these new licensees really become engaged with amateur radio, then we're just creating another class of inactive licensees. I don't know exactly what this program would consist of, but without it, this effort is doomed to failure.

And, who's going to develop and run this program? The only organization that has the horsepower to make this work is the ARRL. They are going to have to step up big time. Most clubs don't have the people or resources to do it properly. If you have any thoughts on this, I urge you to contact your ARRL division director (<http://www.arrl.org/divisions>).

When he's not pondering questions about the amateur radio licensing structure, Dan blogs about amateur radio at KB6NU.Com, writes the "No Nonsense" amateur radio study guides, and teaches ham classes. You can contact him by e-mailing cwgeek@kb6nu.com.

Remember Heathkit Program Night



RIVERLAND AMATEUR RADIO CLUB

Monday February 20, 2017 Trustee Meeting

MINUTES

Call to order: 17:07

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

Approval of Minutes: 01/16/17: Approved without comment

Treasurer's Report: Greg Treasures report available to members upon request.

Committee Reports:

Roger has updated membership list and is in process of preparing mailings to current and prospective new members.

Dan will meet March 23rd with the Rotary Lights group to collect our check for the Club's participation in 2016.

Old Business:

TnT project : Greg will get back to us with a date to meet to take an initial inventory /assessment of the trailer.

Program list for the year is paired down on a month-by-month basis. It was suggested that Kevin make a list of potential presenters, then make some contacts. Dan has a project he would like to do for the May meeting.

Rick will distribute newly written Constitution/Standing rules to executive members by end of week for their review and comments.

Club shirts were discussed, It was decided Kevin will pursue some local embroiders for what they could offer. It was suggested shirts could be ordered for officers to wear, to try to encourage other members. Club will pay set-up fee at embroiders. Roger had a club patch as an example of what could be used on new shirts.

Sign ups for upcoming events looking good, March 11th parade, April 29th walk, and also May Granddad Half marathon will be another club event.

New Business:

New 2017 RARC archive CD's were distributed to all officers

RARC membership in "VOAD" was discussed, Kevin will get more info before final decision made

Discussion ensued regarding talking to local media to get our Club information "out there"

Greg volunteered for the position of Club "P.I.O." (Public Information Officer) to help in this regard. This was unanimously approved.

Motion to Adjourn : 18:36

Respectfully submitted by Rick Kolter, KD9GVS

March 2017

| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|-------------------|--------------------|----------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----------------------------|
| | | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 5 | 6 | 7 RARC Program Night | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 St. Patrick's Day Parade |
| 12 Wis. QSO Party | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 |
| 19 | 20 Trustee Meeting | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 |
| 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | |