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## Rolling the Rock...

As I continue my journey through life I find that I have attained a mile stone recently. It required not so much my skill at achieving it as much as it required that I just have hung around long enough to get where I am. My achievement to some may be great, to others who have already exceeded it, maybe not so much. Many of the people that I know have already passed this mark and others are still working on getting there. All that it takes is surviving the years.

As a youth I fancied myself a sort of a renaissance man. That was when I was bold, brash, and naive. Modeling myself after the great figures of history, I pushed the envelope of my existence to ever greater limits. Some times these goals were easily attainable while others were not. Often times when a goal that was set became out of the question I would acquiesce, drop it, and move on. Other times, I continued with some limited success and pushed forward to meet those goals or exceed them. As time wore on, things changed and so did I.

Some of the things that I tried to do became unattainable due to outside circumstances that were beyond my control. Other things were doomed by my own lack of foresight or the will to continue, but I always tried anyway. Like Sisyphus, I often found that there was a rock that I was forced to roll up hill, only to lose my ability to keep it going up that hill, it would get away from me and roll relentlessly back down the hill to the bottom. I would then go back down to the bottom and try again to get that rock to the top of the hill. As it can be seen this could be a very frustrating experience that had little chance of succeeding. But that rock needed to be moved, one way or another. So I would continue to move that rock.

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## UPCOMING Events for February 2024

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

March 3, 2024	Mark kb9ofk
March 10, 2024	David kd9epn
March 17, 2024	Rick kd9gvs
March 24, 2024	Wayne k0wlo
March 31, 2024	Mark kb9ofk
- ◆ **Saturday** morning Rag chew, weekly on the 146.970 repeater, 8:00-9:00 AM.
- ◆ **March 5** ...Monthly meeting at UU Fellowship Hall, LA Crosse
- ◆ **March 19** ...Trustee Meeting, Time: 5:30 PM, Las Margaritas. All members are welcome to attend. [Note new location](#)

## PRESIDENTS COMMENTS

This is getting to be a very busy time of the year with many events coming up very quickly. As I'm writing this, we are two weeks away from the Wisconsin QSO Party. It is held March 10. This is an event that I have really grown to enjoy the past couple of years. It's nice to be the center of attention. If you're not familiar with a state QSO party, it is an event in which at least one station in each QSO must be from the state hosting the contest. Wisconsin in this case. As a Wisconsin station, a participant can contact a station from anywhere. Stations from outside Wisconsin must contact a Wisconsin station for the QSO to count towards the contest score. We have the shelter at the Stoddard Village Park reserved for the event. Since La Crosse is the club's home county, we get 500 bonus points for portable operation in another county. The contest runs from 1PM to 8 PM. We will start setting up somewhere around 10 AM. We'll also add a potluck to the event this year. Please bring a dish to pass.

The week following that is St. Patrick's Day weekend. Our club has historically provided communications support to track parade progress and help with spectator safety. We are often paired with a police officer for the event. I know I have helped my LAPD partner with traffic flow (and therefore crowd safety) in several years I have participated. It is nice to get to know La Crosse's Finest, if only for a few hours. We have also enjoyed corned beef sandwiches and a beverage of choice at The FreightHouse afterward. There has been live music there at times (as well as a lot of green clothing). It's a good after-

noon. Contact Rick Kolter, KD9GVS (crack Net Control Operator), if you'd like to join us.

The club is also close to its first licensing class in many years. It will be held on March 23 and 30. Please let anybody you know who might be interested in taking the Technician exam know that it is coming up soon. We have a team of instructors who will go over the topics needed for the exam on the 23 rd . Students will have the intervening week to study on their own, then we will have a question and answer session on March 30 before offering the exam. We will have books available for participants to purchase (at cost), and we have to send a fee for proctoring the exam. We'll have to pass those charges along to participants to take the class, so we'll collect \$50 per person.

In April, we will also hold our first Hams in the Park of 2024. The plan this year with Hams in the Park is to hold it on the second Saturday of each month. The only month we'll part from that plan will be September as we'll be busy with Steppin' Out in Pink on the second Saturday. We will set up at Roellig Park on April 13. Roellig Park should be good for erecting antennas, and there is room to spread out a bit. It should also give good exposure to folks traveling on Hwy. 16 coming into La Crosse from Onalaska.

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## Rolling the Rock... (continued)

Many years ago, when I was an Art student at UWL, my classmates who knew me, would tell me that I could argue with a post. Perhaps they were right, but every once and a while I did seem to win that argument. At least there are no posts left to disagree with me on that point, nor are there many of my classmates left to verify this. I seem to have out lived most nay sayers and many of the people that I have met along the way. Again, this is no great achievement, it just is.



So where does all of this get me? I'm not sure. I still am the same, but much older me who rolls that rock, and I seem to make some progress from time to time, but still have set backs. Such is life. I'm sure that there is a reason for all of this, but it isn't always clear what that reason might be.

Many of you who have read my missives here on "The Key" have a certain knowledge of my tales of my famous, or maybe more correctly infamous garage and its contents, can relate to my plight. Oh yes, progress has been made on my goal of clearing out the "stuff" in my garage. I did manage to get it emptied enough so that my XYL could get her car in there, just barely, as I promised her. But like Sisyphus, things continue to get away from me from time to time. Unlike Sisyphus, I have had help in my endeavors, and I think that there might be a gleam of light at the end of the tunnel. But the clock keeps ticking and at times I don't seem to be getting anywhere, but I do press on.

Others have observed that all that I need to finally conquer my garage is a large dumpster, and maybe that will be the ultimate solution to things here. I still have hope that with a little help from my friends, I can achieve that goal anyway. It may or may not happen, but at least I continue to roll the rock, even though I pass one mile stone after another, I still press on rolling that rock. Stay tuned for more on my plight. In the mean time...

73 from the older but not much wiser Carl kc9hds.



## VHF/UHF happenings

Greetings to all Club members,

Last month's article focused on the 444.475 repeater replacement, and as promised this will be the "rest of that story"

We left off last month with the repeater leaving for Cypress, California for a "vacation". It was sent out on October 6, 2023, and I received it back on October 25th. I will say I was impressed with Yaesu service, they were very responsive. The report from Yaesu was that there was "evidence of burn damage to the transmitter unit" Bottom line is I believe this damage was very likely caused by high ambient temperatures in the building and the unit running 50 watts on a high duty cycle. Other repeater operators I have talked to typically run the DR-2X at the mid-power setting of 20 watts, which also gives adequate coverage. An amplifier is typically used if any more power than that is needed on a continuous, or high duty-cycle basis. I also learned a bit about what a "circulator" does on the transmitter output of a repeater. More on that in a future article. Suffice it to say the unit was back in operating condition and it was time to take it back to the site.

Dan, AB9TS and I agreed to meet on November 3rd to reinstall the repeater. The weather was unusually warm for November so we wanted to take advantage of that. Here's where things took another turn, because to our surprise upon arrival at the site, the door to the control building had been completely replaced and was now sporting new locks as well !

Luckily Dan had the contact information for Pat Burns, the caretaker of the building. He was contacted and agreed to meet us that same day at Ace Hardware in La Crescent to get us a new set of keys made.

Many thanks go out to Pat for his responsiveness that day ! We found out from Pat that vandals had destroyed the existing door. See accompanying photo. After meeting with Pat and stopping for lunch we headed back to the site. The new keys



worked and we were in ! Re-installing the repeater was a straight forward task. We did double check the feedline and antenna with Dan's VNA and everything checked out. A few test transmissions with our HT's on site, and happy day, we were back on the air!

It has been a fun learning experience for sure, and I want to once again thank those that made a monetary contribution to the project, as without that it likely would not have been possible.

## President's Comments (Continued)

We have a new location for our Swapfest this year, too. It will be held at Stoddard's American Legion Post. The church we used last year will not be available on the date we chose (June 15). Stoddard's Legion Post will be a very nice facility for our Swapfest.

Speaking of swapfests, our neighbors at MVARA will hold their swapfest very soon (March 2). It will be at the Onalaska Legion Post.



Drew

AB9NE

## BUY-SELL-TRADE-ISO



*Wanted: Articles for The Key*

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

Wanted: Ham shack, antenna and other ham radio related pictures that can be used in the Key.

*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.*

Looking for items for this space

## 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: 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](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 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 2022 Board of Trustees and contact information.**

President.....Drew Neve, AB9NE Email...ab9ne@yahoo.

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