



INSIDE THIS

Musings ...	1
President's Comments	2
Bioenno Battery	3
Steppin Out in Pink	4
WIPOTA	5
Buy, Sell, Trade, ISO	6
Club Info	7

Musings...

We never seem to have enough things of interest to talk about in "The Key." It's not that we don't have interesting things happening all around us. It's just that some times the things that are happening don't seem interesting enough to bother recounting them in an article. You know what I mean. Things happen that are considered "normal" or "ordinary" or of little interest so we discount their value. But shouldn't we take a second look at them to see if there isn't something of merit in what is there?

Let's take a look at some of the things that have happened recently in the Ham Radio Community. Things such as our Annual SwapFest, Field Day and POTA and SOTA events and Service events like Storm Spotting and fund raising events like Stepping Out in Pink are other special events that might go under noticed or under reported, but are vital to our community.

Our Annual SwapFest is an example of an event that, although its here and gone in a single day, be lies it's significance and it's goal. Some say that it is of little use so we should just not do it anymore as it requires so much advanced planning and logistical support to make it work. Since there usually are only few sellers and not a lot of buyers in attendance, is it really worth the effort? At it's best it is a fun money maker for our club, where we can meet people that we seldom see or hear, all gathered in a relatively relaxed environment where much interaction can take place. Granted, there isn't usually a lot of items displayed, bought, or sold at this event, and there are rarely any surprise guests there that can spark unexpected interests, but the very nature of this event is such that one never knows what will happen at it. For many, this is not so much a time to buy or sell Ham equipment as it is a chance to learn new things through conversations and chanced meetings. All in all it is a very valuable event for us to host, even if we don't realize a lot of funds from it.

Continued on page 6

UPCOMING Events for October 2023

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

October 1, 2023	Wayne k0wlo
October 8, 2023	Mark kb9ofk
October 15, 2023	David kd9epn
October 22, 2023	Rick kd9gvs
October 29, 2023	Wayne k0wlo
- ◆ **Saturday** morning Rag chew, weekly on the 146.970 repeater, 8:00-9:00 AM.
- ◆ **October 3...**Monthly club meeting at UUF La Crosse
- ◆ **October 17...**Trustee Meeting, Time: 5:30 PM, Fork and Fable. All members are welcome to attend. Notice new date and place.

PRESIDENTS COMMENTS

We've just this week had our calendar turn from Summer and into the beginning of Autumn. As an organization, our club has just finished up a very good Summer with many of our usual activities, and some new ones to keep the membership busy and give the chance to contribute to our community. Heading into the Fall gives us a good opportunity to reflect both as individuals and as an organization. Change of some sort is constant. It's worth assessing what changes to make to improve from where we were. This club will not benefit from stagnation at all. How do we want to use the upcoming winter to put ourselves in a better position come next Spring?

The club is positioning itself to continue some of the changes that it has started. Some of the club equipment has been sold. That has been done in hopes of subsequent purchases to update and give members the chance to use equipment that is a bit more "state-of-the-art" at events like Field Day. The Board is looking at items that the club owns and determining what items are things we would want to keep, and what items we'll want to move along to a new home.

We're also in the early process of putting together a licensing class in the hopes of attracting new members. More details will come out within the next couple of months, but please start to think about friends or family members you might want to let know about the opportunity.

Reflect also as an individual. One of the great things about amateur radio as a vocation is the variety of aspects into which a person might develop. What new areas might you want to explore? How might you want to improve your skills? Recent improvements in propagation have made HF communications particularly exciting as opposed to where we were a few years ago. We've tried to present different options as a club and will continue to do so. The club wants to support you in whatever interest you might have. I mentioned in last month's column about the CW Academy class I am taking. I am in the middle of

that class right now. It helped a great deal to prepare me for last week's WIPOTA contest. I hope to be able to participate in more CW contests in the future. It was a thrill to be a part of it.

You might also wish to seek personal fulfillment with involvement in club leadership. That applies to new members as well as past officers. We are rapidly approaching our annual meeting in December. That meeting includes the election of officers. Not all of the current officers will want to continue. The current Board is made of members who have served on the Board for many years. The Board is not well served with stagnation, either. All of its members have served with distinction, and it is a personally fulfilling thing to do. It is realistic; however, to think there will be some ready to move along. It is a sign of strength to have more nominees than vacancies, so please don't think that you should wait to see how many vacancies there are. Put your hat into that ring and step forward.

Drew, AB9NE



Bioenno BLF-1215A LiFePO4 Battery

My ham radio station at home is powered with an Astron RS-20M. It does a fine job of powering my 2 meter packet radio setup and my Yaesu 857D. However power outages such as the one we experienced during the December 15, 2021 wind storm limited my station's capabilities. At the time I knew I wanted a deep cycle battery. I had originally planned on purchasing a large marine battery to have on hand for such situations.

In addition to powering my station at home, I wanted to be able to carry it out into the field. Having helped Drew AB9NE load his gear during our 2022 Wisconsin QSO Party outing, I quickly learned what a chore it is to lug around a conventional deep cycle battery. Then I started hearing about the Bioenno Power batteries. They offer a lot of juice in a small light weight package. They are an ideal battery for going mobile.

In early spring my wife asked me what I would like for Father's Day. My mind immediately jumped to ham radio gadgets and I suggested that she and the girls chip in on purchasing a Bioenno battery as I was handing her the Ham Radio Outlet catalog. Sure enough on Father's Day I was presented with the BLF-1215A LiFePO4 battery.



The battery package is fairly robust and can withstand some minor abuse, but the outer skin is plastic and can become slippery when held with a sweaty hand. I decided I wanted to protect the investment and went about building a "Tonka Toy Tough" box to encase the battery. I wanted the box to be light weight in addition to being equipped with a handle and rubber feet. The handle facilitates transport and the rubber feet keep the main body of the box off of wet surfaces when in the field.

The box itself is made of 3/4" plywood that has been painted black. As can be seen from the picture below, the box is by no means water proof but it will provide a reasonable amount of protection from the elements.

The inside of the box was dimensioned such that when the backside panel has been screwed in place, the battery snugly fits inside (no rattle of the battery when the box is being shaken). Because it is not a good idea to run screws into the edges of plywood, I drilled and inserted plastic dry wall anchors into the edges of the back panel. This provides more bite for the screws to fasten the panel in place while not splitting the "plys" of the wood apart. When the battery's service life has been reached, I can remove the screws and pull out the back panel to replace it with a new battery. At that time the back panel will likely be resistant to removal, for that reason (not shown in the picture) I also inserted a hex nut. I plan on threading a bolt into the nut and using a slide hammer to tug the panel from the rest of the box. During that time, if needed I will replace the plastic wall anchors used in the back panel.



I'm hoping to get a number of years out of this battery and have already used it at home and while volunteering for Ride the Ridges and Steppin Out In Pink. If I am able to get a larger Bioenno I will likely build another box for it as well.

Shawn Hicks, KD9KGQ

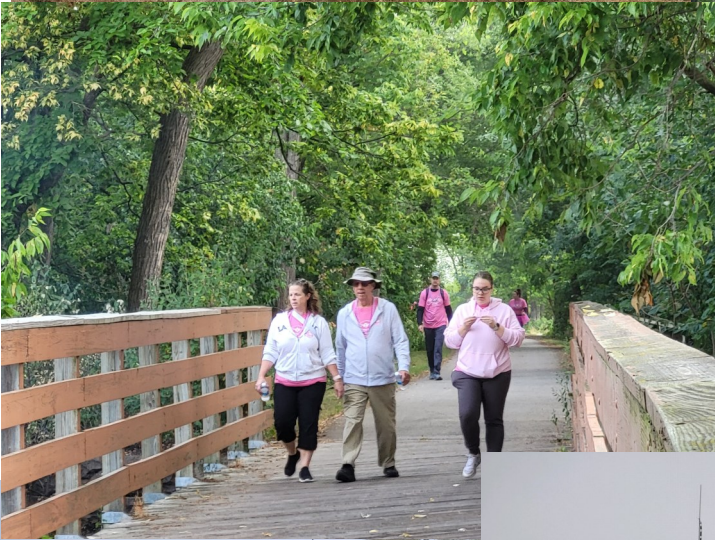


Steppin Out in Pink

On October 9, Riverland Amateur Radio club participated in *Steppin Out in Pink*. It was a lot of fun seeing people stepping out for a good cause. Participating in the event were Jon KD9WPD, Mark KB9OFK, Dan AB9TS, Ron KD9OHQ, Scott KB3MKD, Shawn KD9KGQ, Charlie KB9HSI (not pictured), David KB9EWG and Kole.

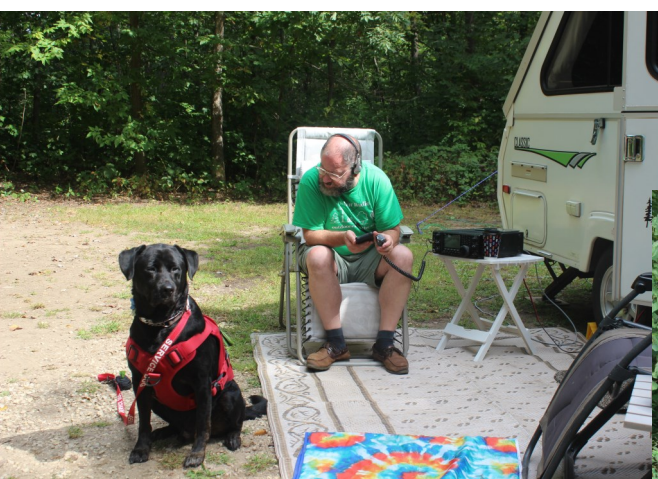


Even the spiders showed their love!



WIPOTA

On October 16, Riverland Amateur Radio club participated in the Wisconsin Parks on the Air contest. Participating were Drew AB9NE, Scott KB3MKD, Mike KB9HV, David KB9EWG and Kole. Also stopping by were Steve KB9BMX and Kathy (Scott's XYL).



Musings... (continued)

The Annual Field Day is another event whose goal is more social than the idea of being competitive in striving to make the most QSOs. It does present an opportunity for everyone who comes to this event a chance to get on the air and make contacts with other Hams around the country and the world. This in itself is noteworthy but not the main reason for doing this. The real goal is to demonstrate our ability to set up in a less than ideal location where we are forced to depend on our use of minimal equipment in an attempt to communicate with other Hams over a set period of time. This is often a learning experience that benefits all who participate. Again, another worthwhile endeavor for our club.

Like Field Day the POTA (Parks on the Air) and SOTA (Summits on the Air) events are done in a more minimal setting where the goal is to activate stations in Parks or on Summits to better prepare for unusual situations that are present in such locations. The benefits of these events is again an opportunity to use and refine our communications skills in a relatively unfamiliar location. These are always a positive experience that foster a lot of self reliance and expanded learning.

Added to this list are the Public Service events such as Storm Spotting and Communication Support for fund raising events like Stepping out in Pink. Events such as these are especially important as they give us an extra reason for our Special Services designation and yet another chance expand our abilities to work together in support of other organizations.

These are but a few of the things that we can and do do to communicate on the air. After all we must always remember our pledge..."We ar Hams, and we can transmit, if we have to, I guess!"

73 Carl kc9hds



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.

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. 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 Fork and Fable 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.....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

Repeater Trustee.....Roger Reader, KA9BKK Email...readers@centurytel.net

Newsletter Editor.....Scott Cross Email...kb3mkd@arrl.net