

Hamgram

April, 2016

Winona Amateur Radio Club
Winona, Minnesota



Storm spotting session is April club program

Spring and summer storm spotting training will be the April 21 program for the Winona Amateur Radio Club. The session will be 6:30 p.m. Thursday, April 21, at the Wilson Fire Hall 29660 County Road 12, Winona.

The National Weather Service scheduled this time and could not change it. The WARC Executive Board decided to make it the club's official meeting as well.

Refer to the official National Weather Service site for other locations, www.weather.gov/arx/skywarn_schedule

The NWS recommends spotters attend training at least every other year.

A reminder of storm spotting importance came in a strong, early spring storm April 9-10, 2011. A warm front was the focus for severe thunderstorm development, and resulted in several tornadoes over northwest Iowa along with large hail and damaging winds.

The atmosphere was unstable ahead of a cold front with favorable winds for storm organization, which included supercells. Storms rapidly developed around 3 p.m. with many producing severe weather within 20 to 30 minutes of initiation. The first



warning locally was issued at 3:39 p.m. The storm movement was very fast - nearly 70 mph at times.

A severe thunderstorm produced very large hail (3 inches in Hokah) and two swaths of straight-line wind damage to Houston County. The damage paths were just north of Caledonia, crossing Highways 76 and 44. Radar estimates on wind speed were upward of 70 mph. Damage to trees were reported, power poles and lines, a barn, and one mobile home was shifted off its foundation.

La Crosse National Weather Service image



VE Testing results in six new Hams

The club had a successful VE testing session March 21 at the conclusion of the Spring 2016 Technician licensing course. All six candidates who had completed the study course and tested obtained their licenses including one at General.

VE testing was organized by Paul Schumacher, K0ZYV.

It was clear that it would be a good night. As candidates turned in their answer sheets to the volunteer examiners, smiles began to break out. Then all six candidates tested for General Class even though the study course didn't cover the additional requirements in detail.

Earning General Class was Chris Herman KD9FUS. Candidates earning Tech Class licenses were Greg Hyland, KE0IJE, Adam Wiczorek, KE0IJF, Bill Chavez, KE0IJG, Joe Whetstone, KE0IJH, and Keith Laken KE0IJI.

Welcome these new hams as you meet them either in person or on the bands.

In addition, there was one walk-in Tech Class candidate who tested and one person seeking to upgrade from General to Amateur Extra. Neither was successful.

The testing session leader was Schumacher. Additional participating VEs included Erik Brom, WB0NIU, Clare Jarvis, K0NY, Roger Wise, KI0F, Syed Faruque, AC0VA, and Len Litvan, KC0RSX.





Club members watch a demonstration of APRS World's manufacturing process.

VE Testing May 23

The Winona Amateur Radio Club will be holding a VE session at 6:30 p.m. Monday, May 23, in Watkins 105, WSU campus.

All exam levels will be available.

Note that the Extra Class license question pool expires at the end of June, so now is your chance to get the upgrade you have been studying for.

APRS World hosted club March meeting

The creative, entrepreneurial world of Jim Jarvis', KB0THN, APRS World was on display March 2 for the Winona Amateur Radio Club monthly meeting. APRS World is a small specialty manufacturer that specializes in data logging and control equipment primarily for the renewable energy industry. It was developed in Jarvis' student apartment and developed into a five or six person company now located in Goodview. Club members were treated to live demonstrations of surface mount production, press brake, CNC milling, and some of the firm's interesting products.

Jarvis explained how APRS World evolved into specializing in the design and manufacture of equipment used on electricity generating windmills and cranes. Also how they have done much development of gear used in the harsh Arctic.



Jim Jarvis, KB0THN, host for the club's March meeting.

You may have heard that "it takes 10,000 hours to become an expert at something," or a variation of this statement. But what the expert really said about becoming an expert involves more than just putting in the hours. Four things are important: 1) Finding a Mentor, 2) Pushing the envelope of your performance 3) Learning by experience 4) Reviewing your performance to understanding how to improve.

Gamehaven Merit Badge Fair-2016

By Len Litvan, KC0RSX



What fun it is to be around young, energetic people. And with the Gamehaven Merit Badge Fair this year, we had the added experience of meeting some smart, motivated boys with their heads screwed on right. Working with the Boy Scouts sometimes like a struggle what with the requirements for demonstrating current Youth Protection Training and for becoming a certified Radio Merit Badge Counselor, but at other times the results are rewarding enough to make it worth while. This year's merit badge fair was one of those "it was worth the effort" times.

There were five Boy Scouts going for Radio merit badge this time around, and they had a good experience. The one-day format, which was new for us this year, provided the time to cover the required knowledge areas plus allowed time for plenty QSOs on HF, 2-meter mobile, and 2-meter HT. The Rochester ARC guys were helpful in providing their repeaters and ops to interact with the boys. Ops in Indiana, Pennsylvania, and Texas answered the boys' CQs and provided what one boy described-wide eyed--as "the most awesome conversation." We were proud of the way

the scouts demonstrated good operating practices--good use of phonetics, proper identification, good courtesy, accurate logging, and other practices.

The morning was spent on orientation and covering the knowledge requirements of the merit badge and was lead by Len Litvan, KC0RSX, Mike Cizek, W0VTT, and Melanie Reap, KD0NTM. John Kowalik, K2OPT, provided a display of ham radio gear and components for the boys--including a vacuum tube for each boy to take as a souvenir of the day. Kowalik also set up the HF station and coached the boys as they made their HF QSOs and logged the results.

Four of the scouts earned Radio merit badge during the day and one of those--a Winona scout--has serious interest in going for his ham Tech Class license within the next couple of months.

Another interesting development came out of the merit badge fair: In planning VHF QSO support with the president of the Rochester ARC, he indicated that the Rochester group might be interested in working jointly with the WARC in future merit badge fairs or in conducting a JOTA site with the WARC. We're following up on the possibilities and will keep everyone posted on developments.

WARC Board Meeting

March 2, 2016, Watkins Hall, Winona State University. Present: Lance (KB0YJU), Harro (KG6RLM), Paul (K0ZYV), Dan (WK0W), Syed (AC0VA), Les (K0BAD via Skype from Hawaii), Mike (W0IH), Erik (WB0NIU) Called to order by Paul at around 7 PM.

Treasurer Report

Treasurer Report was on hand. Harro explained some part of Treasurer Report. Harro did figure out the discrepancy on the account (\$200.00) found last time and it is fixed now. Board discussed and decided not needing to correct the already submitted reports. Harro reiterated that going forward reports will be up-to-date. Paul initiated a motion to approve Treasurer Report. Report was approved.

Les stated that he has received the checks Harro sent. No further discussions of treasurer report. Treasurer report was passed.

Committee Reports

Dan mostly restated his submitted report. There will be Skywarn training by the National Weather Service, Thursday April 21, 6:30 PM at the Wilson Fire Hall. Basic SKYWARN procedures for our WARC spotters should be scheduled before the summer severe weather season starts. Perhaps we can briefly work that into a club meeting program, or schedule a separate meeting if it seems needed.

Erik ordered and received the backup power equipment for the Witoka Tower.

Erik made changes to the Raspberry Pi to make it more reliable on APRS.

Mike, W0IH and his crew installed the backup power equipment and "cleaned up" the installation at the Witoka site.

Remote HF at Witoka is not operational at this time. A new computer and operating system is being prepared for installation to handle the HF function and be compatible with the 12 volt supply.

Dan, Mike and Erik have been busy at the LEC tracing and repairing antenna feeds that were inadvertently cut during construction. Mike Peterson from Emergency Management has been very helpful in this process. Currently, our primary VHF radio, and the APRS radio are functional again. Another dual band antenna

that allows us 440 MHz access is now functional. We also have access to another VHF antenna that is no longer being used, but it has a Motorola proprietary connector that will need to be changed. Mike Peterson offered us the use of his personal Kenwood D-700. He is not yet licensed but would like to see the radio put to good use.

Emergency Management will be getting a new computer in the radio room. When this is available, APRS, remote HF, FL-DIGI, and other appropriate software will be installed on it.

Walt continues to attend monthly County Emergency Planning meetings on behalf of WARC.

We have permission to use our own climber at the Witoka tower, provided the climber is insured.

A committee meeting will be scheduled when more committee members are available to meet in person.

Erik also explained cables he made to run APRS with D710.

There was nothing much new from Repeater Committee. Erik talked about extent of reach of 440 Repeater. Dan mentioned he did connect with 440 Repeater from South side of La Crosse. Dan thinks south of Winona has good coverage of 440 Repeater. Erik mentioned for 440 Repeater there is newer software and that could be loaded any time. Mike mentioned he will try to get to Witoka tower next Week and try to update the software. Erik mentioned 835 Repeater has been working very well. Lance still working on APRS on bluff siding. Erik and Mike talked about configuration and placement of equipment and cables at Witoka site. Erik has changed the club address with FCC and QRZ (new PO Box address). Erik will also do the same with Repeater Coordinator. Paul mentioned we are still getting mails in Jim's address. There is no problem there to get the mails and Paul / Jim thinks problem will resolve itself after everybody concerned gets the new address.

Erik mentioned while going through stuff at old Foundry he came across quite an amazing documents of early days of Winona Amateur Radio club like first

Hamgram, pictures of early days, call signs, early QSL cards etc. Erik specially mentioned one QSL card with Les's (K0BAD) early call sign. He plans to share some of these to other club members.

Paul presented on behalf of Education Committee. Paul mentioned current Licensing Class started with nine students and finally settled down to seven students. Lance mentioned there is already request for Fall Class through club web site and Paul did response to the request.

Lance discussed Show and Tell presentation as part of Open House of Winona County Historical Society. Mike / Erik helped out with a setup of Remote HF Operation. Also presented was Raspberry Pi APRS model. There were about 200 people there despite snow fall and there were few strong leads to join Radio Club and get Radio licenses. Lance also did some radio contact including one person working with wildlife refuge (other than Trempealeau). Lance also mentioned Club has been contacted by Trinona organization to help out their June 12 event. Board unanimously approved participation in Trinona event. Lance will provide more details as they come up. Lance does not need any budget for the event. Dan mentioned we should participate anytime we get request for these types of events. Board member agreed that these events give us good public relation, positive exposure and way for new Hams to participate in public events. Lance also raised a concern that in bluff siding, APRS station transceiver failures. There have been five Transceiver failures in last three years. Paul asked if bugs getting to the site. Lance/Erik mentioned the equipment is in a refrigerator and getting hot should not be issue. Erik mentioned they have been running OK for last 20 years and all of a sudden we are seeing an issue. Paul mentioned Static Discharge. Erik mentioned Antenna investigation. Board discussed more in the issue. Lance will explore more specially grounding /whole setup and report later.

Fund Raising

Lance has been in touch with Bob about
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kick starting Fund Raising effort. Les mentioned Fund Raising should be kept simple. Technical details should be kept out as general public might not understand. Paul replied if someone has specific request club would gladly provide that. Paul had an idea of donated storage space. Paul knows someone who owns few storage units and they can be approached for donation of space. Paul volunteered to contact the storage unit owner. Paul asked what is the longest equipment we need to store? Lance replied if we get anything 9 foot long, would be enough. Mast is the longest one. Paul brought the issue of maintenance of Witoka tower. Dan stated when Erik gets the backup power, all the equipment there would be re-worked. Mike with the help of others will work on maintaining the Witoka tower. Mike gets duplicate emails from Board announcements. Paul will delete one of Mike's emails.

Board then discussed the list (appended to this report) Mike sent to Board members for Fund Raising goals. Dan stated that for some of these items to wait for Fund Raising will take long. Need is more urgent. Dan really wants to get that HF rig sooner and up and running. Dan can then go to Emergency Management and showcase our club. For example we can

offer our Remote Operation to Homeland Security and tell them they can get to our HF if need to. Dan mentioned he thinks it will be long wait to Fund Raiser and we might be talking about it next year also. Les provided his input on the effort. Dan mentioned we had already committed funds from members for the HF rig. Board discussed more on this issue and also of storage trailer. Everybody agreed with Dan's frustration. Paul is not opposed to take loan from members to purchase HF rig or any other emergency item with the stipulation that these loan amounts will be returned. Les shared his experience with Lions and Kiwanis club. Les stated if we get loan, we have to start raising money seriously and plan to return the loan. Paul mentioned his experience with HBC to get the Internet donated at Witoka site. Les also shared more of his experience to raise funds over the years. Board then approved the motion of taking of loans from members (total up to \$ 2000) for high priority projects and these loans will be paid back. Mike mentioned he is willing to donate and does not expect back the amount. Dan mentioned donations could be made tax deductible. Dan does understand the motivation to continue Fund Raising instead of taking loans. Les will generate some documents in this effort and send to members.

All these loans will be processed through treasurer. Paul asked if we should set time limit to pay back these loans. Everybody agreed one year is reasonable amount of time to pay back the loans. There were then more discussions on the subject of Fund Raising.

Paul brought the issue of Climbing towers and if club has insurance to cover a climber. Club has a member who can climb but lacks certificate/insurance. Lance stated climbers are generally bonded and self insured. Dan mentioned this specific climber is retired and no longer licensed or bonded. Dan mentioned climbing has to be agreed by Mike Peterson of Emergency Management. Tower belongs to county and we need county permission to allow people to climb tower. Discussion will continue, Dan will talk to Mike. Dan mentioned our budget will not allow for climbing tower this year again like last year. Les explained what minimum we can do. Erik mentioned we had issues with 900 MHz sector Antenna. Discussion continued on issues of this Antenna and Erik provided more input. Dan/Erik mentioned all Antenna issues must be resolved before schedule to climb tower. Erik mentioned there is no critical need for climber now.

Meeting was then adjourned.

Calendar

Thur. April 21

➔ Winona Amateur Radio Club meeting, 6:30 p.m., at the Wilson Fire Hall, 29660 County Road 12, Winona.

Sun. May 22

➔ Wisconsin Antique Radio Club Swapfest, 7 to 11 a.m. The Terminal, 5917 S. Howell Ave., Milwaukee. Radios, tubes, parts, books.

Mon. May 23

➔ VE session, 6:30 p.m. Watkins 105, WSU.

Sat. June 12

➔ Trinona communication support.

Sat-Sun., June 25-26

➔ ARRL Field Day

KCORSX turns over reins of Hamgram

Len's still here but he's not here as our newsletter editor. In case you haven't noticed, this is the first Hamgram in four years that hasn't had Len Litvan, KCORSX, as its editor. Bob Seaquist, W9LSE, follows him.

Litvan, almost 75 years old, is a relatively new Ham, earning his license about 12 years ago. He's been interested since high school and even built himself a Heathkit shortwave receiver. Life, in the form of marriage, children and employment intervened until he was on a job in Milwaukee working with a Ham. His interest was rekindled and, being in Milwaukee, found



his way to AES (Amateur Electronics Supply) for gear.

Litvan failed his first try at a license due to the CW part of the exam, but got through it on his second try. Some of his on-air work is straight key CW though he's modest about his skill and his fist. KCORSX is now an Extra.

He likes DXing, socializing with the club and just being, in his words, "an all around good guy."

Litvan and his wife, Terry, are preparing to get closer to their family and put their Twin Bluffs home on the market Monday. Their hope is to move east and perhaps locate in or near Indianapolis.

His successor invites submissions and information for the Hamgram. Send it to seaquist.robe@uwlax.edu

Jim Wilson, N7JW, still in radio

There's a name common to early hand held radios and present day CB antennas, not to mention many electronic devices: Wilson. And radio legend Jim Wilson, N7JW, is still inventing and still start ing companies.

Maybe you've heard of cell-phone amplifiers from his current company, Wilson Amplifiers.

Wilson has been a ham for 61 years though his early on electronic work was with atom bombs at the government's Nevada test site. He wanted to be his own boss so in 1964 started building CB antennas in his garage. The business exploded so in 1968 he borrowed 2,000, which was a lot of money at the time, and jump started the garage business. He formed a relationship with Yaesu that would continue for years with Yaesu building components for his equipment and even building the basis of the Wilson hand held two way radios. Before long the Wilson was selling 20,000 base station antennas a month from Wilson electronics.

Though Wilson's little Yaesu built handy talkies were an amateur radio success it was the business radio business that made money. "You can't make a living selling for amateur radio," Wilson told Hams at the Dixie Amateur Radio Club in St. George, Utah. In 1979 he sold his business to Regency which later went bankrupt.

Wilson jokes that he's had many successful businesses that



went broke after he sold them.

He got into satellite television antennas and receivers early on when it was 4 Ghz. He eventually sold that enterprise to Cincinnati Microwave which subsequently went bust. Wilson explained that Cincinnati Microwave involved many Proctor & Gamble people and when they took it over they brought in the manager who would be managing a pampers plant in Japan.

A restless entrepreneur, Wilson decided to go back into the CB antenna business developing a very high Q antenna, "It's still at truck stops as matter of fact and it has not changed at all in 16 years," said Wilson.

The cell phone booster business started after his most recent retirement. Wilson said his wife had a stroke and he was concerned for her safety. In Southern Utah where he lives cell service is spotty so he designed a cell phone booster. He sold the business to Sorenson and retired. Except now he's making a device called Cargolide which is an extender for pick up truck beds.

He reminded the Hams that he, too, is still a Ham. With a friend, Wilson owns some desert land where they have an antenna farm including an eight element 160 meter vertical array.

Wilson made his presentation Feb. 17 to the Dixie Amateur Radio Club of St. George, Utah.



Are you dreaming of Field Day?

The imagination is one of the greatest tools in our toolbox. Sitting here in dreary April with cold, gray skies, it's a great time to fill your mind with thoughts of the warmth of the June summer sun, while you remember the smells of the great outdoors and hear in your mind's eye the sounds of last year's Field Day.

Field Day is always a different experience. Set-ups change... propagation changes... participants come and go... equipment

from last year may be replaced with the next generation of gear... That's the beauty of Amateur Radio - we are always given the opportunity to embrace change.

Adapting to those changes is where your imagination really comes into play for Field Day. That state of flux always provides everyone participating with the opportunity to share their knowledge, as well as learn from others. After all, once the last QSO is recorded and the last

sweep to clean up the site is complete, it is really about the people - those we worked with during those magical hours and those we contacted during the brief weekend.

There are two rule additions affecting Bonus Points worth a 100-point bonus: actively utilizing a social media platform such as Facebook, and by having a safety officer for the operation. Dream a bit, plan a bit and be sure to be a part of our Field Day!

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Dues: \$25 per calendar year per license holder. \$30 per calendar year for all licensed members of the same family within the same household. Send dues to: Harro Hohenner, Treasurer, P.O. Box 1451, Winona, MN 55987

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Monthly club programs are held on the third Thursday in Conference Room B, Winona County Office Building, 202 West 2nd Street, Winona.

The submission deadline for the Hamgram is Wednesday of the week prior to that of the club programs

