

# Hamgram

January 2017

Winona Amateur Radio Club  
Winona, Minnesota

## Net control retires after 47 years at key

Apollo 11 astronauts Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin walked on the Moon, half a million people spent four days thrilled by the mud, drugs, sex and music at Woodstock, the Federal Communications Commission banned cigarette advertising and Ken Spittler, NØJP, was net control station for the Minnesota Section Net (MSN).

Forty-seven years later Astronaut Armstrong is dead, Nixon quit in disgrace, Woodstock music has not been surpassed, cigarettes are still off the air and NØJP **finally** wrapped up his net control duties. "It is a staggering feat of conducting CW net control duties for 47 years," notes ARRL Minnesota Section Manager Skip Jackson, KSØJ. "You must admit that is an impressive record of achievement."

Duties called NØJP to the key every Saturday at 6:30 p.m. He would have his radio warmed up and tuned to 3685 and his "bug" in a comfortable position so that he would call for check-ins on the MSN. Not every Saturday, of course, because there were times to celebrate his wedding anniversary with Delores, NØNUO, or have other important family occasions. but he was there almost all the time sometimes just taking check-ins and sometimes passing important news.

There was traffic to pass: During the Vietnam War it was common to let families know their son or daughter had arrived safely at boot camp. There were the fun and



simple messages assuring the home folk that their neighbors were enjoying the State Fair.

Spittler hadn't planned on running a net when he became a Ham, but because he liked model airplanes, and to fly one with radio control (on 6m), the pilot had to have a Technician license. Adding a complication, WAØJPR as he was known, decided to get his Novice certificate in order to increase his radio presence and earned WNØJPR, holding both calls simultaneously!

Early gear in Spittler's shack were a T60 and a R55A Knight Kits though microphones were pretty much absent. Still are. He is a willing and active contributor to the club's Sunday night WEP Net but when he's really operating it's with a "Bug" on CW.

NØJP is not giving up his beloved Ham radio with the Dec. 31 retirement from the MSN. However it is difficult for him to make his way down basement stairs to the only shack he's had in his home. Delores' claim on a first-floor hobby room is as old as Ken's so rather than displace her he plans to explore the club's remote radio at Witoka. There are still too many special event certificates to earn, too many Route 66 stations to contact and too much on the bands to ignore.

# Holiday party Jan. 19

Put a little jingle in your jangle and join Winona Amateur Radio Club members and their spouses (or guests) for the club's annual holiday party. Festivities begin at 6 p.m. at the Winona Family Restaurant, 1611 W Service Dr, Winona. Ordering begins at 6:30 p.m.

## Winter safety



Weather recently has proven there will be times when icy road conditions and snow will make for difficult travel on the road. Having an automobile preparedness kit in your vehicle at all times will not only come in handy but will also keep you safe in case you experience trouble on the roads. Of course, to be really safe simply stay off the roads during hazardous winter weather. To be prepared for your own safety, the American Red Cross recommends you have a vehicle winter preparedness kit.

A number of places sell vehicle winter preparedness kits and first aid kits such as Target, Farm & Fleet and Menards.

If driving is unavoidable, safety should be your number one priority. Make sure your vehicle has plenty of gas and pay attention to the weather forecast for your travel route and destination. Buckle up, be alert and drive slowly with caution. In the event that your vehicle becomes disabled, keep the car running, make sure the exhaust pipe is clear and leave the window open a crack until help arrives. Additionally, know the

differences between winter storm outlooks, advisories, watches and warnings.

### Here's what you should have:

- Flashlight with extra batteries
- Cell Phone Car Charger
- Blanket and/or emergency Mylar blanket
- Fleece Hat, Gloves, Scarf
- Flares
- Folding Shovel
- Sand or Cat Litter
- Ice Scraper and Snow Brush
- First-Aid Kit
- Small battery-operated radio
- Emergency contact card with names and phone numbers
- Extra prescription medications
- Bottled Water
- High protein snacks
- Maps
- Whistle

## MN QP Feb 4

The 19th Annual Minnesota QSO Party is set for Sat., Feb. 4, and the Winona Amateur Radio club has plans to again set records!

The WARC has been a club leader and there are intentions to be there again.

The perennially successful effort is again tentatively planned for the Wilson Fire Station.

MnQP is a fun and casual on-air operation in which members attempt to make at least one contact in each of Minnesota's 87 counties.

Beside shooting for a great score, the club wants to develop contesting and fun skills for all members

## Radio at WCHS

Every year in February near Valentine's Day the Winona County Historical Society has a Museum Open House at the History Center. It's a thank you to the community for loving their local history. There's a look at what the society does and what the museum offers with activities, crafts, archives research help, treats, and more for no admission cost. This year the open house will be from Noon until 4 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 12

The Winona Amateur Radio club may have an information/demonstration booth as a community partner. The club has set up a station in the past and operated it so visitors get a look at real Amateur Radio.

The will be a VE test session 7 p.m. March 1 at Winona State University, Watklns Hall, Room 105. The test costs \$15, the cost set by ARRL. Refer questions to Paul Schumacher, K0ZYV, at: [wnpauls@yahoo.com](mailto:wnpauls@yahoo.com)

## Wis QP coming



Put Sunday, March 12, on your calendar as the beginning of Daylight Saving Time and, of course, the Wisconsin QSO Party. It's a short, fun, run from 1 p.m. – 8 p.m. and another great opportunity to get on the

air, hone your skills yet still have a great time. The fairly casual style makes for a non-threatening introduction for new comers and a time to renew on-air acquaintances for old-timers.

## Connections for the new year

What are the connections that support our communications? Connections? You mean coax connectors, microphone connector, Anderson Power Poles? Open? Short? Intermittent?

Not exactly.

Dennie Rybiecki, K9LGU/STM, challenged the Wisconsin Section to go beyond checking connections from power supply to transmitter, from rig to antenna, from mic, key, or computer to radio. That's one of the first things we do when something's not working right. And it often solves the problem.

There's a crucial connection we cannot overlook: we must connect with one another.

We must enhance the connections among operators. We need to continue to appreciate each other, learn from each other, and support each other. We must connect with newly licensed Hams or those who haven't been properly introduced to traffic handling, if we want the NTS to survive. If we stagnate, we disappear. We can connect at local meetings, at swapfests, and on the air. We can check those vital connections often and do what we can to strengthen them.

## Warm up with January VHF

The chill you're feeling simply means it's time for the ARRL January VHF Contest! Going to the rare air of VHF is a great way to *warm* up for the 2017 VHF+ contest season. This annual event runs from 1900 UTC Sat., Jan. 21, – 0359 UTC Monday, Jan. 23.

The objective is to work as many stations in as many different Maidenhead grid squares as possible, using frequencies above 50 MHz — often while trying to stay

warm. Contest contacts may be made using SSB, CW, digital modes, and even FM simplex.

What's *really* cool about this contest are these three Single-Operator categories, inviting to newcomers and seasoned VHFers alike: FM-only, 3-Band (50 MHz, 144 MHz, and 440 MHz), and Portable.

Propagation can be a pleasant surprise in January plus getting on the VHF/UHF bands is not hard.



# NPOTA upgrades Hams

*W9LSE operates in Death Valley National Park*

Whew! For the past year I've raced to get to 483 places across the country, parts of the National Park Service. On that last day I went from Florida seashores to the Rocky Mountains on bands overflowing with National Park On The Air (NPOTA) locations I've wanted to visit.

NPOTA was a huge success for the ARRL and Amateur Radio as "we" helped the National Park Service celebrate its centennial logging more than one million contacts doing so. It was fun to go on the radio and collect the National Parks, seashores, memorials, trails, rivers and so on that constitute the National Park Service.

My observance started in February when my wife, Mary, and I wintered in St. George, Utah near some of the great parks such as Grand Canyon, Bryce Canyon, Zion Canyon and Death Valley.

Equipped with a little Elecraft KX3, Buddipole antenna, 12 volt gel cell and an extremely patient wife, I started with nearby Zion National Park, a non start. Zion is a deep, narrow canyon designed to prohibit the escape of RF. No amount of yelling or cursing seemed to get my signal out. Later and somewhat wiser I set up in the higher elevation Kolob Canyon unit of Zion where QSOs flowed as quickly as I could log them.

NPOTA suggested getting permission to operate in the parks so at each I went to the HQ, introduced myself and asked if I could operate. Uniformed Park Rangers with puzzled looks shuffled through memos trying to decide what to do with an Amateur Radio operator: Several layers of rangers would interview me and finally, with apprehension, would suggest a good spot. They also would send a Law Enforcement Ranger to see what I *really* was doing. They were friendly and a few even went on the radio.

Operating was great and the parks were wonderful. Sitting inches from Grand Canyon's 5,000' vertical drop,

overlooking grand, colorful vistas and fielding a pileup was Grand!

I learned activations would be better if I posted the times and frequencies on the NPOTA Facebook page. One result was when Mary and I hurried to see the rare wildflower bloom in Death Valley. Naturally the KX3 came. As I was setting up I heard a couple Hams wondering if "he" was running. Hmmmm? I keyed the mic, gave my call to discover the "he" was me! There, 260' below sea level with QRP gear Hams held a frequency for me!

Set-ups were basic yet there was a big, polite, pile-up. Chasers worked hard to hear me so there were many "3-3" reports but they got logged.

Back home I was a chaser tuning the bands hunting for activations, especially those not spotted on DXSummit or similar sites. The activations that were spotted could easily be seen on a pan adaptor as big, wide blips. Sorry to say, as the year went on the behavior got worse from the guys who thought they owned a frequency.

NPOTA became an opportunity to rethink Amateur Radio. For many it was the first time they ever operated outside the home Shack other than Field Day. NPOTA taught us about what works and what doesn't. We became more in tune with our equipment, using it in ways we never had before, expanding our capabilities and experiences. It was an opportunity for many to build and experiment with new antenna systems, new power systems, new ways of doing things that were previously taken for granted. For many of us, it also became a school for learning (real fast!) how to improvise when piece of equipment was forgotten; or how to make quick (and sometimes not so pretty) repairs when something would break or malfunction. Through it all, we became better Amateur Radio Operators because of it; and there's no amount of money you can place on that.

## WARC Board Meeting Jan. 3, 2017

Members present: Lance Tagliapietra, ADØUT, Paul Schumacher, KØZYV, Dan Goltz, WKØW, Mike Foerster, WØIH, Harrow Hohenner, KG6RLM.  
Members absent: Syed Faruque, ACØVA, Erik Brom, WBØNIU.  
Others present: John Kowalik, K2OPT.

The meeting was called to order by president Paul.

### Treasurer's report:

End of Month: December 2016  
Submitted by Harro KG6RLM  
Balance as reported by Merchants Bank \$2784.84  
Deposits: (dues) \$ 205.00  
(recycle) \$ 34.55  
(loan/donation) \$ 655.00  
(donation for [RemoteHams.com](http://RemoteHams.com))\$ 50.00  
Lance / Dan. Motion approved.

There was discussion regarding the loan agreement document for fund raising. \$600 has been collected so far for the purchase of a new HF rig. Only two persons had indicated they wanted to utilize the loan agreement. Harrow pointed out if we pay interest on the loan, he will have to generate 1099 forms for tax purposes. Paul suggested we not pay interest, and eliminate the need for filing 1099s. There consensus on that

**Election of officers:** Existing officers continue: Paul Schumacher, KØZYV, president; Lance Tagliapietra, ADØUT, vice-president, Syed Faruque, ACØVA, secretary, Harrow Hohenner, KG6RLM, treasurer; and Dan Goltz, WKØW, and Mike Foerster, WØIH, at-large members. Erik Brom, WBØNIU, club station trustee.

### Public Service Committee report.

There's work to be done at the LEC before severe weather season. A couple radios are not up to par. One has a receiver problem and is currently out of service, the other is

functional, but is goofy with the receive signal indicator on the primary VHF radio. It may be a precursor to coming issues. We need to do antenna identification.

### Witoka tower:

The remote HF station is functional and works very well. Access has been offered to regional and state ARES officials, even though we are not technically recognized as ARES in Winona. They have acknowledged our offer, but they have not requested permission to use it. The board has begun a fund raiser to upgrade the transceiver at the site.

The Fusion repeater set up on UHF at the site has developed an undiagnosed problem. It seems to get worse with continued use. I have not been able to visit the site for several weeks.

The APRS installation at the site has been working reliably.

The heat and air conditioning at the site has been working.

County funded upgrades and maintenance at the tower site are on schedule.

Internet access donated by HBCI is working well.

### New Issues:

There is a proposal supported by the Winona Mayor that the City develop its own Emergency Management office headed by the city fire chief. They reasoning it could save the City money. How this proposal will affect our relationship with Emergency Management remains to be seen.

With the proliferation of Fusion digital radios in the area, I can see a potential for incorporating it into our emergency communications plan.

Michael Peterson of Winona County Emergency Management says he may have money in his budget the purchase a Yaesu FTM-400XDR radio for the LEC in 2017.

Having seen and used the Yaesu WIRES-X interface, I am convinced we can do some unique things with it for public service/emergency response. I propose that we purchase a WIRES-X interface and install it on the UHF repeater at the KAGE site. We will need internet access. If we don't have direct access, we should be able to link up using MESH net. Our topography has limited our use of MESH net installations here. The frequencies used require a clean line of sight. It seems to work well from fixed sites, and we should be able to establish a link to the KAGE site from one of our higher location access points. This would be relatively inexpensive.

### Education

The Education Committee will hold classes for the General Class license beginning Jan. 18. Clare, Lance and Paul will be instructors and Melanie will be contacted. Testing for all class licenses will be offered on the last session. Five study manuals have been ordered.

### Other business:

Dan suggested that WIRES-X be added to the Fusion UHF repeater at the KAGE site. Following considerable discussion, it was decided that Dan should research the subject and present more information at the February meeting. Mike would like to convert the internet interface at the Witoka tower to be powered by 12 volt DC, rather than using the AC wall wart, to be consistent with the rest of the equipment there. This will allow all the equipment to utilize the battery for emergency power. Earl Quinell WA0ELW, donated a \$50 ARRL gift certificate to the club. In appreciation, the board is providing two years of club membership.

Adjourned 7:50 p.m.

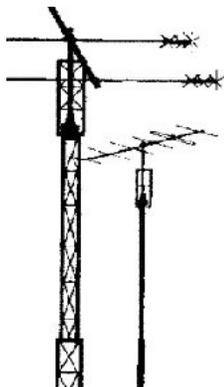
Respectfully submitted, Dan Goltz, WKØW, substitute secretary.

## Coming on-air fun

The North American QSO Party is a good way to make a lot of contacts, and everyone competing will be using a maximum of 100 W. You missed the CW event Jan. 14, but the Phone event is Sat. Jan. 21. There have been some important rule changes so review them at <http://www.ncjweb.com/NAQP-Rules.pdf>

The fine N3FJP log software has been updated for the NAQP ([www.n3fjp.com/naqp.html](http://www.n3fjp.com/naqp.html)).

One more thing about NAQP and other contests: Some contest sponsors will only score contacts with stations appearing in more than N different logs, where N is typically 2 or 3, if that station does not turn in a log. So if you make just one contact in an event see if you can do a couple more to assure the hard-core guys that you count.



## Winter Field Day ahead

Field Day is not just for summertime anymore. Winter Field Day will take place over the Jan. 28-29 weekend, and it can be a terrific time to prep for ARRL Field Day in June. The event's purpose is to encourage emergency operating preparedness in the winter, but it's also an excuse to get out of the house and enjoy the great outdoors. Getting ready for emergency communication in a winter environment is just as important as the preparations and practice that take place each June.

There are three entry categories -- indoor, outdoor, and home. The [rules](#) are similar to those for ARRL Field Day. If you're not up for an outdoor winter adventure involving Amateur Radio, you can operate from the comfort of your shack. The object is winter fun!

### WØNE Repeaters

146.640 PL 100.0 Hz \*

146.835 PL 131.8 Hz \*\*

444.225 PL 100.0Hz FM Voice C4FM Digital \*

442.150, 100 Hz. FM Voice C4FM Digital \*

SkyWarn Net when activated.

\*\* Sunday Night Net—8:30 p.m.

Winona Amateur Radio Club, Inc. P.O. Box 1451, Winona, MN 55987

President: Paul Schumacher, KØZYV, [pschumacher@winona.edu](mailto:pschumacher@winona.edu)

Vice President: Lance Tagliapietra, ADØUT, [lancetag@hbc.com](mailto:lancetag@hbc.com)

Treasurer: Harro Hohenner, KG6RLM, [Harro@hohenner.com](mailto:Harro@hohenner.com)

Secretary: Syed Faruque, ACØVA, [sfaruque@yahoo.com](mailto:sfaruque@yahoo.com)

Custodian: Erik Brom, WBØNIU, [ewbrom@hbc.com](mailto:ewbrom@hbc.com)

At Large: Dan Goltz, WKØW; Mike Foerster, WØIH

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: Treasurer, P.O. Box 1451, Winona, MN 55987

Hamgram is published monthly by The Winona Amateur Radio Club, Inc. Distribution is via e-mail and the WØNE.org Web site. Distribution to individual members by USPS is available upon request. Editor: Bob Seaquist, W9LSE. Address comments and Hamgram correspondence to: Bob Seaquist, 202 Zephyr Circle, La Crosse, Wis. 54601 or [seaquist.robe@eagle.uwlax.edu](mailto:seaquist.robe@eagle.uwlax.edu)

Monthly club programs are held on the third Thursday. The submission deadline for the Hamgram is Wednesday of the week prior to that of the club programs

