

Hamgram

January 2020

Winona Amateur Radio Club
Winona, Minnesota



MNQP set for Feb 1 in St. Charles

Propagation should be improved for the 22nd year of the Minnesota QSO Party giving the Winona Amateur Radio Club team a chance to improve its standing during the event



Sat., Feb 1. Last year the club took third place with 83,640 points in competition with 10 multi-OP stations. The WARC has traditionally scored well chasing Minnesota's 87 counties plus offering Winona County to chasers nationwide.

This year the club's facilities will be in "suburban" St. Charles, hosted by Mike Cizek, WØVTT, who has offered his elaborate shack for operations. Even,

Susan, his XYL, has graciously agreed to co-host.

WØVTT has a large antenna array that is guaranteed to overwhelm other Minnesota stations (heck, the towers are so high that you can see the rest of the state from the top!) and the Elecraft radios offer crystal clear transmission and reception.

☞ **Directions:** To get to Cizek's home, go on I-90 to exit #233, MN Rte 74 NORTH to St Charles. Head north to town. Turn RIGHT (east) at the one and only stop light on to US 14 (E 6th ST) continuing east past the high school and John Deere dealer to big Catholic church. Immediately after the church, turn LEFT (north) on to CR 119 and go about two miles. Park on or along the driveway. If you can't figure out which house is his, you have no business driving a car or calling yourself a Ham.

Join your fellow Hams for the Winona Amateur Radio Club's annual holiday party. It is set for 5:30 p.m., Thursday, Jan. 23. at Goodview Haven, 3655 W. 6th St., Winona. Bring a dish to pass.

For more information contact Syed Faruque, ACØVA, sfaruque@yahoo.com

Check your calendar

Thurs	Jan 23	Holiday Party
Sat-Sun	Jan 25-26	Winter Field Day
Sat	Feb 1	MNQP
Sun	Mar 15	WiQP
Tues	April ?	Skywarn training
Sun	June 14	Trinona communication support
Sat-Sun	June 26-28	ARRL Field Day
Thurs	July 16	Club picnic
Fri-Sat	Sept 11-12	W9DXCC
Sat	Sept 19	Ride The Ridges support
Thurs	Nov 19	WARC Annual Meeting

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Club dues due now

Individuals	\$30
Families	\$35
Send to: Treasurer, P.O. Box 1451, Winona, MN	

WARC Executive Board (unofficial minutes)

Wednesday, Jan. 8, 2020, Watkins, Winona State University

Present: Dan Goltz, WKØW; Bob Seaquist, W9LSE; Erik Brom, WBØNIU; Paul Schumacher, KØZYV; Harro Hohenner, KG6RLM; Mike Foerster, WØIH. Guests: Clare Jarvis, KØNY; Tom Wilmot, WØMK; Marv Rodvold, AC9TO.

Treasurer's Report (Harro Hohenner, KG6RLM)

Balance 12/31/19	\$3,184.87
Deposits	\$435.00
Payments:	
Mike Foerster for tuner	\$75.35
Reimburse Tim Jacobson for dues	\$29.00
Balance at bank:	\$3,515.52
Paid membership	16

Minutes: (Clare Jarvis, KØNY) (Approved)

Board Election:

President: Paul Schumacher, KØZYV
Vice-President: Lance Tagliapietra, ADØUT
Treasurer: Harro Hohenner, KG6RLM
Secretary: Bob Seaquist, W9LSE

Website: Harro Hohenner, KG6RLM, will assume Website duties from Jim Brown, NØWE.

Renewal: (Mike Foerster, WØIH) **Moved: a committee to help with recruitment and retention of new members.** Mike and Paul will serve in addition to members from the club general membership.

Program Committee: Established a program committee chaired by the vice-president that would name programs and assist in preparing them. Dan Goltz, Bob Seaquist, Clare Jarvis and Erik Brom will serve with Lance Tagliapietra.

Public Service: (Dan Goltz, WKØW)

Bob Seaquist, W9LSE, Mike Foerster, WØIH and I prepared a PowerPoint/video presentation on the club's

amateur radio activities, with emphasis on our public service work. This was presented at the Winona County Emergency Management quarterly meeting, Dec. 18, and was well received. District 1 County Commissioner Chris Meyer thanked us after the presentation for the volunteer work we do for the county. This will again be presented to the SOAR group at their Feb. 5 meeting.

Winona County Emergency Manager Ben Klinger notified us that he has \$1,000 up to \$1,500 in grant money to spend on amateur radio equipment for the SOAR and or county communications van. He asked us to put together a list of equipment we would like to see available in those vehicles. The Public Service Committee will be working with Klinger to generate the list. He also has available an HP ToughBook computer for our use, to replace the old machine that cannot be updated. Reporting forms templates, FLDIGI, and RemoteHams are some of the uses for the computer.

Witoka: (Mike Foerster, WØIH)

Mike reported he had worked on the exciter and amp and with Skip Green, K7YOO. He suspects a capacitor is at fault.

Motion: *Buy a new Yaesu Fusion repeater to replace the existing, troubled machine.*

Five board members committed donations to the expense.

Commendation: (Paul Schumacher, KØZYV) Mike Foerster, WØIH, commended for exceptional work on the Witoka gear, the Remote, and the '835 repair.

MNQP: Mike Cizek, WØVTT, volunteered to host the event at his home in St. Charles Feb. 2.

Winona Amateur Radio Club 2020 officers



PAUL SCHUMACHER, KØZYV

PRESIDENT



LANCE TAGLIEPIETRA, ADØUT

VICE-PRESIDENT



HARRO HOHENNER, KG6RLM

TREASURER



BOB SEAQUIST, W9LSE

SECRETARY

The VP6R DXpedition from a rookie's point of view

by Mike Cizek, WØVTT



Most DXers probably dream about going on a DXpedition some day. I know I did, but never thought I'd get the chance to actually do it. For me, the next best thing was going to Dayton and the DX conventions where I could rub elbows with the "Big Boys" who go to all of these strange far away places. I enjoyed getting to know a number of the guys who went to top 10 countries, and really enjoyed the rare occasion when one would call me by name in a big pile up. After chasing DX for 30 years, I was content with my place in the DX game and had stopped thinking about ever operating from someplace rare or exotic.

However it was quite a shock when Ralph Fedor, KØIR, invited me to the VP6R team in September of 2018. Ralph explained that he wanted to do a trip to someplace fun with a team that combined some seasoned DXpeditioners with some new folks like me. I emailed back immediately expressing my thanks, but also expressing my doubt that the plan would be approved by the family comptroller. The shock from receiving Ralph's email was nothing compared to my wife giving her blessing to the trip: "I think you should go." After a few emails and phone calls, I was added to the team. Learning who the other team members were impressed me to no end. These were the guys I had worked from all over the world; the guys I looked up to and respected. Now I was going to go out to play radio with them. The experienced team members were mainly from the previous year's 3Y0Z (Bouvet Island) operation and they wanted to go some place a little nicer than Bouvet's Antarctic cold. Almost every email Ralph sent out ended with "...let's have some fun", and that became the motto of our DXpedition. Our team email reflector was named "No-Ice Island". The wheels were turning...

We were soon trading planning messages on our team email reflector. I always knew there was a lot of

preparation required, but for the first time was getting an inside look at the details. I had little or no experience in most of the requisite subject areas, but found one place where I felt able to contribute: fund raising. I know how to type and send emails so with a little direction from Ralph, I took on this task. Your club was one of our contributors. Thank you!

Other team members contributed in their areas of expertise. KØIR kept contact with the folks on Pitcairn, Nigel Jolly of the RV Braveheart, the licensing authorities in New Zealand, and kept tabs on the rest of us. Craig Thompson, K9CT, took care of assembling, testing, and networking the radios, computers, and amplifiers. He was also our treasurer and QSL manager. George Nicholson, N4GRN, runs a construction company and knows about international shipping and customs. He handled this area and calculated that we would need to have all of our gear ready and packed in a sea container by June 1. We all had plenty to do, and it was still over a year before we would leave. I kept typing emails and sending them to every DX club I could find.

Most of our equipment was from the 3Y0Z operation. It was still packed in the sea container from Bouvet and was sitting in K9CT's company parking lot in Peoria IL. Some of the team gathered there in December 2018 to do a quick inventory and a few of us went in March 2019 to assemble and test the EME antennas. The weekend before Dayton most of the US team members assembled in Peoria to load the container. Our task was to unload the 40' container from the Bouvet trip, do a complete inventory and assessment of everything, decide what we needed to take to Pitcairn, and pack it properly in a 20' container. We also needed a comprehensive itemized listing of what equipment was in each box in the container. Two days later we were finished. George almost wore out



his laptop typing in every item as we packed and loaded it. The container was sealed and would be picked up in a few days to begin its journey. More than a few cold 807s were hoisted in celebration that evening. I was getting my first taste of DXpedition team fellowship. This is going to be a fun trip.

Container Loading

All of our equipment was on its way, but we still had plenty to do in preparation. Ralph was still finalizing details of our stay on the island and trying to get permission to operate 60 meters; a first from VP6. He found amazing accommodations for us; one of the islanders agreed to house and feed us for a very reasonable fee. Check out Pitcairn on Google maps, look for Andy's Pizzeria, and you can see where we stayed. Look at the terrain view and you can see our take off angle to NA, EU (both NE) and JA (NNW). It was an amazing site. We also received permission to operate from the old commercial radio station ZBP, just a short walk from Andy's house. We would be operating from what were probably the best two locations on the island. Glenn Johnson, WØGJ, was coordinating our travel and lodgings en route. We were getting close to departure.

There were a few changes to the team during the year from initial planning to departure due to work, family, or medical issues. Real life has a nasty habit of interfering with our ham radio plans. The real shock came just a few days before our departure when our team leader KØIR told us he had a medical issue and would not be able to go with us. Ralph immediately named WØGJ our new team leader. Glenn picked up the reins, kept us moving ahead, and we hardly missed a beat. Our final team was now EA3HSO, EY8MM, JR4OZR, KØPC, K9CT, K9NW, N4GRN, N6HC, SM5AQD, WØGJ, WØVTT, W6IZT, AND W8HC. It was time to go.

I'm not a seasoned traveler, and was more than a little nervous about the trip. Fortunately, WØGJ and I met in Rochester, shuttled to the Minneapolis airport where we

met KØPC and K9CT; In LA, we met most of the rest of the team and were all on the same flight to Tahiti. Since there is only one flight a week from Tahiti to the Gambier Islands where we met the Braveheart, we allowed an extra day, letting us to play tourist in Tahiti.

TRV Braveheart

The legendary RV Braveheart! This ship had been there and done that, all over the southern hemisphere. I had seen the pictures and read and heard the stories, and now I was finally getting a chance to board her. Matthew Jolly, the captain, welcomed us aboard. He knew many of the team members from their earlier voyages with him; the greetings were warm and heartfelt. Matt introduced us to his three-year-old son Finn, who were along for the ride. I asked him if he was going to be the next captain of the Braveheart, and he very confidently said no, he was going to be four.

Underway

We arrived off of Pitcairn Island early Thursday morning and sat offshore waiting for the islanders to come out in one of their longboats to bring us to shore. We were all pretty excited now and eager to get ashore and get started. We were fortunate that because of the Braveheart's schedule with other charters, our equipment had been placed on to the island a month earlier. After a short welcome at the dock on Bounty Bay, some of the islanders loaded us on to their ATVs and we headed up the "Hill of Difficulty" to Andy's house.

Longboat

Once we all arrived at Andy's house, station setup started directly. We had our plan and everyone got right to work. I was impressed at how everybody seemed to know what they were doing and by supper time, we had set up



five Yagis for 10 - 20m, two verticals for 30 and 40m, and four complete, networked stations. K9CT made our first QSO on 30m CW with N7XM at 0200z (6 p.m. local time). VP6R was on the air.

On the Air

The next day we set up our low band antennas at the old commercial radio station site. Our main project was erecting a 90' tall vertical for 160 meters; 70' of aluminum tower with 20' of mast tubing and top loading wires. This required the entire team working together. The antenna is mounted on a hinged base and we used a 40' falling derrick to raise it. The biggest folks handled the pull up ropes and pushed up the tower; the rest of us held the guy ropes to guide it up straight; WØGJ directed everyone, telling us when to pull or when to let up. The antenna went up in just a few minutes.

We also installed verticals for 30, 40 & 80 meters and a second 20m Yagi. That first night on 160 meters Nodir, EY8MM, made over 700 contacts. He came back to Andy's house shortly after sunrise with a big smile on his face, and promptly went to sleep. A number of people had told me "you won't believe the pileups" on the DXpedition. I've been a DXer for 30 years and have been in plenty of big pileups, but never from the DX side. I had been practicing from home mostly by listening in the big pileups on other DX stations and picking out callsigns, and thought I was ready. I wasn't! I like to think I'm a pretty good CW operator, but the pileups on the first few days were just too much for me. I retreated to FT8 and let the more experienced ops handle CW. After a few days, things slowed down a bit and I was able to do better. I now have an even greater respect for the ops who have the ability to pick out callsigns quickly and consistently in these huge pileups.

Once I got going, operating from the DX side was a real blast. It was nice to get a good rhythm of steady QSOs going and especially rewarding to work friends from around the world and call them by name in the pileups.

Naturally, we had propagation predictions and most of the team had operated from the South Pacific before, but

there were still plenty of surprises. 30 meters was open all over the world most of the night. We would often work all continents within a five-minute period. We had a regular path on 10 and 12 meters to CT, CN, D4, EA, and EA8 for a few hours almost every day. Sometimes these signals were surprisingly loud.

The most interesting opening I experienced was on 12 meters one morning. I was calling CQ on what appeared to be an empty band. Around 1730z (9:30 local) I heard a very weak and watery SM2 station. I worked him and was called by a second SM2. The opening spread into OH and southern SM, but not into LA or UA. A little later some North Americans appeared, then some stations from southern EU, then more and more USA until at 1800z the Europeans had disappeared completely. This one wasn't on our propagation prediction charts!

VP6R was a multi-multi entrant in the CQWW SSB contest. We shut down our N1MM DXpedition mode logs a few hours before the contest and were ready to start in contest mode right at 0000z. Since I'm mainly a CW DXer, I asked to do 10 meters during the contest. I thought it would be interesting just to see what propagation we would have over the course of the contest. The contest started at 1600 local time and 10m was pretty slow at first. After only three QSOs in the first hour, the band finally opened up with a nice JA run that lasted almost two hours. I was up bright and early Saturday morning calling CQ, but the band didn't open until 1600z (0800 local). We had a strong opening into Zone 33 and I got a good start on my "Worked All EA8" award. I had no idea there were so many stations in the Canary Islands! After a handful of Zone 33, it was all North and South America, all day long, until around 0000z when the opening shifted to JA. It was almost like someone throwing a switch; propagation changed that quickly. By the end of the contest, we had 1050 QSOs on ten meters. I never had so much fun operating sideband before! The final numbers haven't been published yet, but I'm pretty sure we took first place for multi - multi in VP6.

All too soon it was time to put our toys away and go home. We took down the low band site on Oct. 31. Our last QSO was with Jerry, WB9Z, our chief pilot station on 17m SSB at 1800z on Nov. 1, after which we took down the

antennas at Andy's house. Everything was packed up and ready to go by lunch time that day. Once again, we had allowed extra time, just in case, but everything went very quickly.

We now had some time to play tourist and do a few good deeds for some of the local hams.

We helped Meralda, VP6MW, and Mike, VP6AZ, get back on the air by providing antenna parts, supplies, and some technical assistance. Meralda was already active before we left the island, and let's hope that Mike is on soon. I was especially happy to help Meralda because she was my very first Pitcairn Island QSO back in 1989.

This trip would not have been possible without a lot of help from a lot of people. Foremost, ACOM, DX Engineering, and Flex Radio. These companies were very generous. We also had other corporate sponsors, 38 different DX clubs and, hundreds of individual DXers who helped us out. Thanks on behalf of the entire VP6R team.

No DXpedition report would be complete without some numbers. We made over 82,000 QSOs on all bands 160 through 6 meters. We were pleased to have 21 percent of our QSOs come from Europe, a very difficult path from the South Pacific. We were also happy to make nearly 900 QSOs on 60 meters and 36 EME QSOs on 6 meters; both were firsts from Pitcairn. For a complete analysis of our operation please see the statistics page on our Club Log DXpedition Chart.

The trip back home was remarkably similar to the trip out to Pitcairn, but with greatly different feelings. Going out was filled with anticipation, excitement, and more than a little trepidation; I really didn't know what to expect. Going home was mostly gratitude for having such a wonderful experience. There was also a bit of regret at having to leave such a beautiful place, but it was mixed with the desire to return home and resume my "normal" life. This was a once in a lifetime experience visiting a strange far away corner of the world, meeting new people, and experiencing radio conditions on the "other" side of the pileups.

The travel and radio experiences were wonderful, but for me the most rewarding aspect of the trip was experiencing the wonderful fellowship among our team members. Being a part of this team was an honor and a pleasure I will remember for the rest of my days. From the very beginning of planning, K0IR kept saying "let's have some fun", and that's exactly what we did. We hope you had fun, too.



Winter work

Station improvements

By H. Ward Silver, NØAX

From the "On All Bands" blog by DXEngineering

Station repairs and upgrades can take place all year round including in our chilly and snowy winter weather.

Station Notebook—Your Ham Radio Memory

One of the most important aspects of upgrading your station isn't a piece of equipment at all—it's your *station notebook*. The station notebook is one of the best ways to make your work pay off. When you notice something, bad or good, writing it down will ensure that you don't forget about the issue. This is where you record those important observations like, "The 20 meter dipole has an intermittent SWR problem," or "Can't read the rig's display in direct sunlight."

Like a logbook of your on-the-air activities, the station notebook is where you record information about the equipment in your station. For example, write down test results after you install something new or make a repair, like an SWR curve for a new antenna or how much power you can get out of an amplifier on each band. What color of wire did you use for the connections to your rotator? What size hardware did you use to attach the vertical to the mast? What is the wiring diagram and fuse list for how you hooked up the battery charger and the power distribution strip? Make writing in your notebook a habit.

After every contest or comm team activation, even if it's just you by yourself, do a "hot wash" to capture ideas and notes about station performance. Was it hard to reach the antenna tuner? Did your power supply smell hot after operating on 80 meters? Maybe that chair cushion needs replacement or the doggone foot switch kept moving around under the desk. Write it all down!

Rotator Control Box Cable Color Codes				(99)
Pin	Bundled Cable	Trailer Conn	Ground Color	
1	Blk + Pink + Purple	Blk	Blk (Hvy)	
2	Wht + Gray	Wht	Wht (Hvy)	
3	Green	Grn	Green	
4	Blue	Yel	Blue	
5	Org	Gray	Org	
6	Yel	Blue	Yel	
7	Brn	Red	Brn	
8	Red	Brn	Red	
from T2X doc'n				
Spin	Black	Black	Black	
1	Black	Black	Black	
2	White	White	White	
3	Green	Green	Green	
4	Blue	Yellow	Blue	
5	Org	Org	Org	
6	Yel	Blue	Yel	
7	Brn	Red	Brn	
8	Red	Brn	Red	
Solonoid (Box term #)				
Motor	1-2	0.75Ω		
	1-3	1-5	3.5Ω	8-4
	1-4	1-6	5Ω	
Pot	3-7	500Ω		
wiper to pin 1				
* Note: Tower 2 color-coded wiring per Cinch-Jones, converts to NØAX at control box Cinch-Jones (i.e. bluf/yel and red/born swapped)				

Repeater etiquette

☞ When first listening to the repeater, wait 10 seconds before beginning to speak, there may be a pause between transmitting stations.

☞ If there is no

repeater activity, say your call sign along with the words "listening" or "monitoring." Do not say CQ with your call, this is for HF use.

☞ To call another

station on a repeater, say their call two times and then your call once. They may be scanning repeaters and a longer transmission time gets you noticed.

☞ Saying their call first

gets their attention to listen for who is calling.

If you want to join in a conversation, say your call between station pauses. Do not say the word "break."

☞ When you have announced your call during a pause the station that would be speak next should be the station to acknowledge you to avoid any doubling.

☞ If you have to use phonetics, use the standard version not something made up.

☞ Speak like you're talking to someone in person. Do not say "HI-HI" for laughter, "Roger" to acknowledge, or use the radio codes (QSL, QTH, QSY, or XYL), for conversation, these are for CW use.

☞ Our repeaters have a 2-1/2 minutes time out setting. Let up on your PTT for a second before continuing.

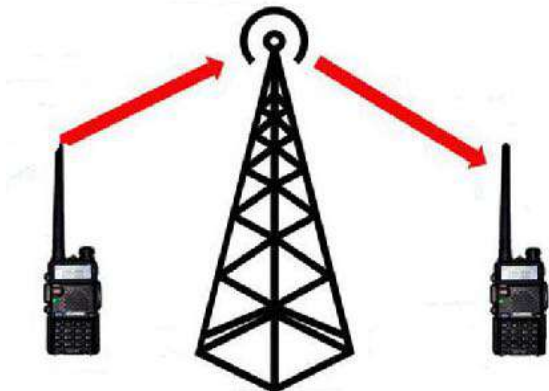
☞ On our VHF repeaters, you hear the courtesy tone about a second after a station stops transmitting. ALWAYS wait for that between transmissions. When a repeater ID's that is an indication all stations on at that time should ID.

☞ Don't say your call with the words "for ID." What else do you use it for?

☞ Never activate a repeater without announcing your call sign. If it was unintentional announce your call and clear yourself.

☞ If a station sounds bad, let them know it. They may be able to adjust radio power, or made aware of a radio issue that needs attention.

☞ Use simplex when appropriate to get use to communicating without a repeater and use of a tone squelch.



Enemy of good

By Patrick Moretti, KA1RB

Something that my engineering mentor used to tell me: "The enemy of good is better." That quote resonates in my head as I look at a burned out resistor on a Drake TR-4C I was working on. Just one little tweak more to get a better S/N ratio and it will do the trick... oops too much. In my haste I forgot about the double peak and tuned beyond... not as dire a situation as it could be, but still—it was good and I tried to make it better. What I like about those vacuum tube circuits is that you can trouble shoot them with your nose and your eyes! No test instruments needed.

That theme—"the enemy of good is better" applies in a lot of what we do in Amateur Radio.

Sometimes we take something that is working at one level and by trying to improve it, we destroy the essence of what it was. Not to say that we shouldn't strive to be the best we can be - but rather to say that we must be sure to recognize what we have that is good and be sure to know its limits or boundaries so that a tweak in the wrong direction will not cause a catastrophic failure. Yes, we can come up with a better antenna. Yes, we can improve the filtering and noise cancelling on that radio. Stagnation is as much an enemy of success as trying to improve beyond a "good" level. So do work to improve your circuits, antennae, clubs, approaches to new members, recruiting techniques, all that you do... but keep a perspective so that your efforts don't ruin a good thing or improve it beyond your capability to sustain it.

MNQP coming!



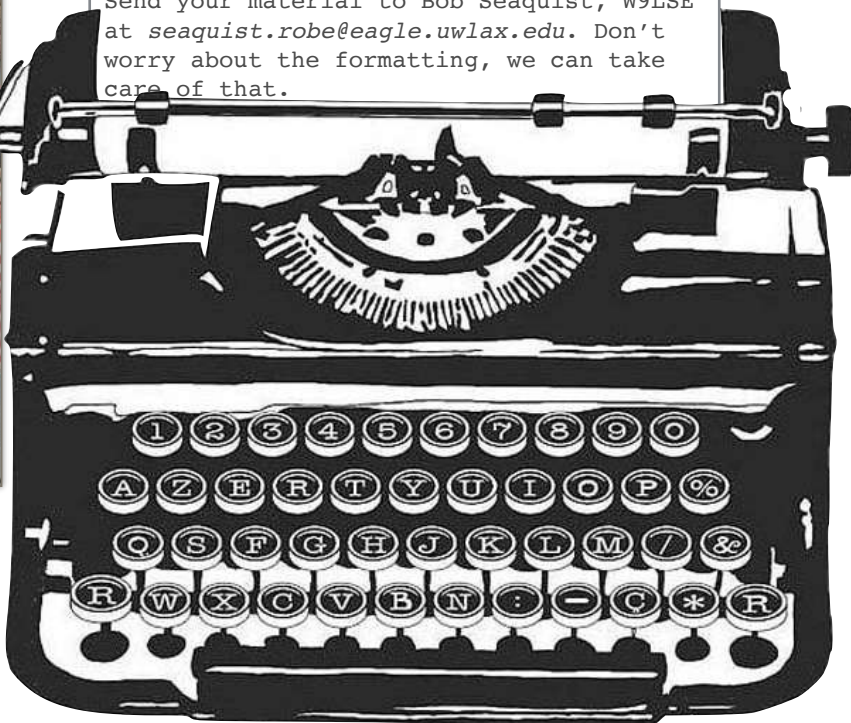
Lance Tagliapietra, ADØUT, right, makes a contact during the Minnesota QSO Party. Observers include John Kowalik, K2OPT, left, and Dick Lindner, WØRIF. This year's event will be at the home of Mike Cizek, WØVTT. See page one for details and directions.

Articles Wanted!

Share your knowledge and experiences

All relevant articles are welcomed for inclusion in The Hamgram. If not an article, let us help you flesh out your idea.

Send your material to Bob Seaquist, W9LSE at seaquist.robe@eagle.uwlax.edu. Don't worry about the formatting, we can take care of that.



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 meetings are 7 p.m., third Thursday of the month at the Winona County Office Building, 202 West Third St., Winona. The monthly program is open to the public.

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

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Bob Seaquist, W9LSE, secretary, seaquist.robe@eagle.uwlax.edu

At large: Dan Goltz, WKØW; Mike Foerster, WØIH.

Dues: \$30 per calendar year per license holder. \$35 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

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