

Hamgram

September 2017

Winona Amateur Radio Club
Winona, Minnesota

Ham radio success for bike ride

Communication planning and execution for the 2017 Winona Rotary Club's Ride-The-Ridges bicycle ride was noticed by ride coordinator Mike Bernatz. The ride wasn't even over when Bernatz made it clear, "I will not commit to doing the ride again unless the [Winona Amateur Radio Club] says it will do communications!" Bernatz was extremely impressed by WARC preparation for the bicycle event and even more impressed at the extremely high level of communication achieved.

WARC communication support Sept. 17 was the second time the club has provided support for the bicycle ride, the first time in 2016 when, at the very last minute, the club stepped in to help. Bernatz was very pleased with the 2016 effort and even more so this year.

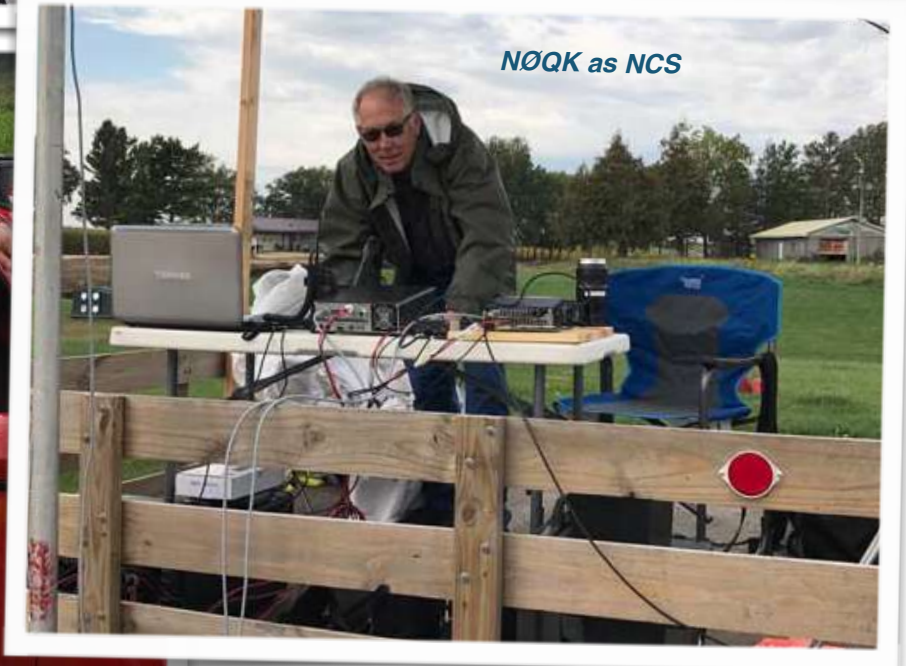
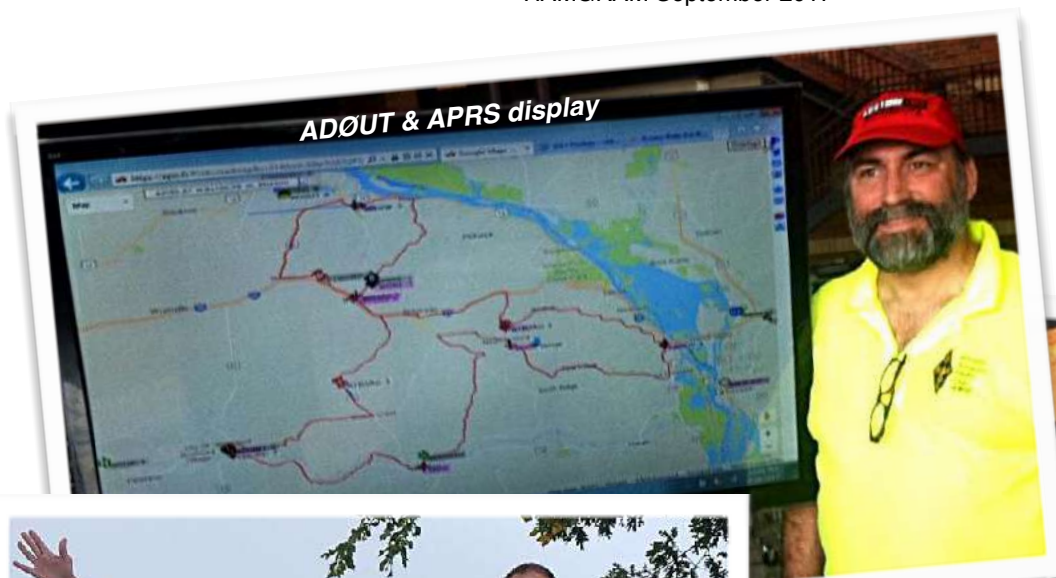
It is a challenge to have radios work effectively over a huge course that runs from Winona to Rushford to La Crescent through some steep, narrow valleys. Riders travel routes that vary from 23 miles all the way to 105 miles. Keeping contact involved two repeaters, the club's 442.150, the Riverland Club's 146.97 as well as a cross bander so there would be some RF in the deepest valleys. Keeping track of everyone involved APRS and, to make it work, adding a digipeater high above Houston. Club members were pleased with the results, including Erik Brom, WBØNIU who noted "99 percent of what we tried to do worked, the other 1 percent didn't matter, and the customer (Rotary Club) was happy."

"I received compliments and gratitudes from many Rotarians...so there is a definite recognition of the value of Ham radio. The phrase I heard a lot was, 'there is no way we could do this without you guys.'"
-Jeridiah Welti, ACØKO

Those that helped make the event a success for the radio club include: Erik Brom, WBØNIU; Dale Cohenour, KEØEKD; Bill Davis, WØMZN; Dan Goltz, WKØW; Nancy Goltz, KAØPJM; Paul Degallier, ADØUU; Harro Hohenner, KG6RLM; Claire Jarvis, KØNY; Rick Kolter, KD9GVS; John Kowalik, K2OPT; Russ Marsolek, NØQK; Bob Seaquist, W9LSE; Cathie Steinhoff, KC9ZEZ; Lance Tagliapietra, ADØUT; Jeridiah Welti, ACØKO; Steve White, KDØBOD.

Club program, Sept 21:
'What we learned from RTR operations'





WARC Board Meeting

Tuesday, Aug. 8, 2017

Board Members: Syed Faruque, ACØVA, Paul Schumacher, KØZYV, Dan Goltz, WKØW, Mike Foerster, WØIH, Harro Hohenner, KG6RLM. Guests: John Kowalik, K2OPT, Marv Rodvold, KD9GJB, Bob Seaquist, W9LSE. Called to order by Paul at around 7 PM.

Minutes approved.

Treasurer Report approved.

Gift acknowledgment. Paul talked about a donation he feels needs special recognition. Paul will send a thank-you note. Multiple people donated for the Witoka transceiver. Paul suggested we should have a policy on donations. Harro said those that made cash/check donation got a letter with donated amount for tax purposes. Board feels we should ask specific questions on donations like the person donating would like to be acknowledged publicly or privately or just stay anonymous. Board had more discussion on the topic. Bob said non-profits list their donors in some form. Board decided to list the names of donors in Hamgram but not the amount. If anonymous, wish would be respected. Harro will provide the Witoka transceiver donor list to Bob for Hamgram. Paul will write a policy for accepting gifts/how to publish the donor list and other issues. Policy will be a form with information, like name, description of the donation, private or public intent etc, so we can acknowledge. Paul will try to make it simple form but workable for our purpose. Marv has experience working with non-profits, accepting donations. Merv shared how it is handled.

Committee Reports

Education Committee: Licensing Class is planned with classes held at Watkins like other years. Paul is working on details. Paul will co-ordinate with Melanie for the class.

Public Service Committee. The public service committee has been busy working with the Winona County Sheriff and City of Winona Fire Chief to assure there is coverage for the County Emergency Management Office until a new director is approved. Our committee and WARC are very appreciative of the cooperation, trust and responsibility that these gentlemen have shown WARC. We need to continue to work hard to be available when needed and provide the service to these agencies they expect from us.

There have been several SKYWARN events this season that demonstrated what we can do and our commitment to public service, and our ability to self direct in the absence of an emergency management director.

Dan and Paul have to work on the WARC emergency alerting system that has been disrupted by the change of computer servers that WARC now uses.

The major task for the committee will be to work with and provide support for the Ride the Ridges Rotary Club bicycle

event September 16. As I will be unavailable for the event, Paul, AD0UU is taking over as the WARC liaison. This is a major task for our organization, and could well involve asking other clubs for help to support it. Having met with Mike Bernatz of the Rotary Club, and Ray Sylvester of the Sheriff's SOAR group, we have identified a number of challenges for communications. As many as 13 stations, either manned or remote may be needed for the event. The event will include 4 rides of various lengths, the longest being 100 miles and covering southern Winona and northern Houston counties. SOAR's limitations include not being able to cross county lines, the limitations of their 800 MHz radios in the deep valleys that the ride will take, and their limited personnel available on that day.

We are very fortunate to have a good working relationship with SOAR and we should be able to overcome these problems with good planning and participation by our members.

Amateur UHF and VHF FM and APRS will be used, as well as county ARMER 800MHz and cell phones to provide communications. Our goal is to be effective communicators for the event using whatever means necessary. Our APRS setup will be highly visible at the registration and information desk at ride headquarters. The goal of the ride organizers, aside from being a community fund raising event, is to make this ride the best ride in the area from the safety, organizational, and logistics standpoint. We demonstrated last year that we can significantly contribute toward that goal. This year three SAG wagons, seven rest stops, ride headquarters, and two "floaters" will need to be coordinated.

Witoka site. Mike has been working on Witoka site. He discussed how to bring in cables inside and seal the holes.

Dan asked if we can use MESH antennas owned by club. Les (K0BAD) may be contacted in matters related to MESH. Marv has experience with omni directional antenna. Dan stated we need to connect from KAGE tower to Witoka. Paul mentioned he visited KAGE site with others to do some work.

Mike brought up the issue of club property (antennas, masts, power supplies etc) stored in different places. Suggested the club needs to inventory and consolidate. Paul said the club does not now have a system. He said we have been looking for storage that would solve some problems. Syed mentioned we can have a listing without storage space. Paul/Dan/Eric/lance all have some of the club equipment. Marv volunteered to take on the storage shed project. Mike and Marv will travel to Witoka and to plan the storage shed project.

Meeting was then adjourned.

Lessons learned from Ride the Ridges operations will be the focus of the Winona Amateur Radio Club's Sept. 21 meeting, 7 p.m. at the Winona County Office Building, 202 West Third St., Winona. Ride support was a big event, using many of the club's VHF and UHF resources. What did we learn this year working with the Rotary Club? Ideas to improve operations should we be asked to help next year.

We've a lot of new knowledge and experience to share with the group. Examples of 12V harnessing batteries (more than one way to do that) with inline fusing for temporary setup in SAG vehicles. Why you should check your batteries that you have on a cheap float charger? What the IOTA does different to maintain batteries that your \$10 float charger does not?

When All Else Fails

Hurricanes Harvey, Ivan and Katia, not to forget the West's wildfires and Mexico's earthquake occurred about the same time an X-class solar flare Sept. 10, hobbled HF bands. The communication blackout lasted for nearly three hours and could not have happened at a worse time. What are the chances that such an event would align with hurricanes in the Caribbean?

Good thing we have the Internet.

Yes. It's been Ham radio's best ally in our quest to maintain essential links *when all else fails*. That's why we need to dispatch the notion that blending radio and the Internet is a bad thing. Making use of all available technology to extend the reach of amateur radio just makes sense. Our club's multi-media work with the River-To-Ridge bicycle tour, adding to our Ham gear the state's ARMER system as well as cell phones, says to me that to

communicate we can't be stuck on one thing.

Time-after-time, many in our hobby fought technical advances such as phone, transistors, SSB, SDR and more because "that's not real radio."

What is our hobby?

Ham radio, from its start, has been communication, innovation and fun. Remember that the ARRL was all about relaying communications and the membership then did all it could to improve the technology for the communication to succeed. Our club demonstrated, during the River-To-Ridge event, that innovation (creating specialized power supplies and utilizing cross-band repeat) and melding technology (APRS, using public service ARMER) added to a successful event. There was no failure as Amateur Radio again proved itself.

That time

Time to get antenna projects done before the weather sours!

Operating tip

Expect to be loud" entering each pile-up. Loudness is more than watts through your coax - it's an attitude. If you expect to be successful, it can be a self-fulfilling prophecy.

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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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

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