



April 2021

The Hamgram

April 2021



April 15 program

Communications for a huge public service event



Helping out at a public service event can be as easy as the 'guys' showing up with their HTs, but **huge public service events** such as the Medtronic Twin Cities Marathon are an Amateur radio event unto themselves. Just ask Erik Westgard, NY9D, the Winona Amateur Radio Club's speaker April 15 (see sidebar). Westgard, is Chair of Medical Communications for the Twin Cities Marathon, the Red White and Boom Half Marathon and Loppet Winter Festival.

Westgard teaches Digital Strategy and Innovation at Metropolitan State University in St. Paul.

Hams at the Twin Cities Marathon use rented UHF trunked radios, five ham repeaters, mesh networking and various other systems including D-STAR for this effort. They also provide live video and data transmission for the race, the medical support and first responders. In addition, they provide a realistic disaster backup communications system leveraging resilient RF sites and free of Internet transmissions.

Among other functions provided by the Twin Cities amateurs is an open source Linux database/web application server which supports tablets, phones, laptops and any type of underlying network. It has a chat function, keeps a running tally of medical tent beds in use, and has a status/query/report screen for emergency operations centers. Families can go to the "Find Your Runner" desk in the Family Medical Tent where hams will look up the runner in their systems.

Westgard has also led the effort developing an open source hardware project- a fleet of eleven tower /generator trailers using surplus construction site light towers. These can be rapidly deployed to support public service activities such as disaster relief.

Winona Amateur Radio Club meeting

When: 7 p.m. Thursday, April 15

Where: Zoom. From the Zoom app enter the meeting id number 3120290434 and the password WarcBoard when asked or go to

[Join our Cloud HD Video Meeting now](#)

and sign in. NOTE the password:

WarcBoard

Who: Erik Westgard, NY9D

What: Large scale public service communications



- Thur Apr 15 Club meeting
- Sat June 26 Field Day
- Sat Sept 18 Ride The Ridges
- Sat Sept 26 Waumandee Vintage Time Trials



Towering issue at W9LSE

By Bob Seaquist, W9LSE

Towers are Ham radio monuments. They bring height to match frequency requirements but also bring danger to the arrogant, careless and stupid.

I'm moving to a new home and I thought it would be a good idea to take my tower with me.

Moving a tower is tricky business that has killed a number of Hams, even experienced Hams like Paul Bittner, WØAIH, a man who frequently worked on towers. I wanted to safely move my beloved aluminum tower so I consulted with tower expert Mike Cizek, WØVTT. "I don't climb no stinkin' aluminum towers," he said. That got me thinking of how I put the tower up in the first place, with the help of a sign company's bucket truck.

The first W9LSE tower was an ancient 30' TV tower. It supported a G5RV inverted Vee until, alas, only one of the three legs was left among the rust dust. Clearly I needed a new tower and a self-supporting tower. It could only be a maximum of 50' to comply with city zoning regulations. The solution that suited the city, radio and my pocketbook was a 40' Universal aluminum tower with an 8' mast. It was not cheap by the time it was in the air.

The tower itself was \$1,500, an investment in reliability and enough strength for wind load on my antennas. The extras, though, and there are extras and extra extras, run the tab up faster than the tower. Higher too! I recall these expenses as I dismantle my set-up and prepare for a new location. There is lots of coax supplying three antennas and a vertical hidden among my wife's garden. There are lightning surge protectors for each line, many six-foot ground rods, mounting brackets and, a four foot cube steel-reinforced concrete block foundation.

Once the base cured (a month) it was time to erect this lovely tower. Greg Miller, K9LEC, recommended a sign company to do the lifting. Sign companies routinely lift signs and they have truck cranes suited to lifting no-so-heavy items high. The tower weighs about 150 lbs. with antennas, rotors and coax. So the sign company owner and six of my elderly friends got the tower up-and-connected in short order. None of us were injured, the tower worked, the city inspector was ok and no neighbors complained (before raising the tower I discussed it with them and showed photoshopped pictures demonstrating what it would look like).

Since the tower went up in 2015 the beam has twisted, the coax didn't have enough slack, there were other minor issues and my wife wanted us to build a new house. The tower had to come down, at least for maintenance, and now because we're moving. (Don't build a house when you're in your 70s. The building process and the moving will kill you. Just sayin')

Bright and early April 1—April Fools—the sounds of a diesel engine and airbrakes had me springing from



my bed. There, in front of the house, was a 100' La Crosse Sign Company bucket truck. It was no joke and was, in fact, a great relief: "Toby" and "David" were at the house to take down my tower and antennas. In rapid order they positioned the truck at the curb, ran the bucket up and moved the beam to the front yard. Then Toby rode the bucket to the top of the tower and looped a line over it while David unbolted the base. Slowly the tower glided to the front of the house, was lowered and the sign company truck disappeared from the neighborhood.

The sign guys were here for less than an hour, worked quickly and confidently. did not cause undue anxiety, all for a dang cheap rate, about \$200. Much cheaper than cardiac or orthopedic surgery for an old guy and his buddies!

This project moving W9LSE to a new site is not even half over but I think the most difficult part is past. Even though I'm moving the tower, lots of coax, and lots of other unexpected bits and pieces, there surely will be more expense. With luck I will be able to install mechanisms at the new site so I can fairly easily raise and lower the tower myself when maintenance needs arise. I would, in a heartbeat, again hire the sign company's truck if I needed it because it was a slick and relatively cheap solution.



WARC Executive Board (unofficial minutes)
 Tuesday, April 6, 2021, via Zoom



7 p.m.

Paul Schumacher, KØZYV; Dan Goltz, WKØW; Mike Cizek, WØVTT; Bob Seaquist, W9LSE; Erik Brom, WBØNIU; Clare Jarvis, KØNY; Tom Wilmot, WØMK; Harro Hohenner, KG6RLM.

Minutes: Bob Seaquist, W9LSE

Treasurer's Report: Harro Hohenner, KG6RLM

Balance on 2/28/2021 \$4,794.73

Deposits:

Dues \$30.00

Payments:

Fleet & Farm (Field Day shelter) \$94.48

Balance reported by bank \$4,730.25

Paid members (2021) 42

Harro will send a notice to persons who have paid in the past reminding them to pay for this year. Paul will encourage Hams new to the Sunday WEP Net to join.

Repeaters: Erik Brom, WBØNIU. We are finally going to move the WØNE APRS unit from the farm building on Rooster Ridge out to the 146.835 site about a mile away. It will be removed and the equipment brought to town to be checked and possibly repaired. The refrigerator that served as a case must be disposed. The antenna, mast and coax must be removed from the site. Mike Cizek, WØVTT, volunteered to coordinate the removal.

The APRS equipment should function better at the new site and could become an iGate. There is no rent at the new site.

Public Service: Dan Goltz, WKØW. The committee has been inactive for most of the Covid pandemic.

Two events are scheduled for this year: Ride the Ridges is still scheduled for Sept. 18, and the Waumandee Time Trials event is scheduled for Sept. 25 with a weather makeup Sept. 26.

Winona County Emergency Management is trying to contact a tower climber for work on the Witoka tower. We will be notified when that is scheduled. There is a plan to replace the Sheriff's command trailer with a smaller, more user-friendly trailer, but those plans are still pending. We will be asked to assist with installation of the amateur equipment in that, and the SOAR van when that is ready.

At this time, no large scale exercises are planned.

Winona County is still limiting in person contact, and our meeting room remains unavailable.

Next Meeting: Bob Seaquist, W9LSE. Erik Westgard MD, who coordinates communication for the Minneapolis Marathon will discuss comms for a very large event; also, he will talk about construction light trailers that have been converted to portable radio repeaters.

Post Office Box: Paul Schumacher, KØZYV. Paul wanted to know if there is something that can be done about correspondents using the old box number which is still owned by Jim Jarvis, KBØTHN. No action.

Adjourn: 7:28 p.m.

"Breakfast" on Zoom

Get back into the Saturday club breakfasts without the fear of Covid. The Winona Amateur Radio Club will meet 9 a.m. Saturdays on Zoom, <https://minnstate.zoom.us/j/3120290434> Pass: WarcBoard



MNQP sets record

Despite a socially-distanced world, the Minnesota QSO Party (MNQP) set an all-time record for participation by surpassing the 624 log mark. The ongoing State QSO Party Challenge is certainly a factor. Perhaps the COVID restrictions have brought more people to the airwaves? This year's 624 logs is significant, because in 2020 we set at an all-time record by just surpassing the 400 log mark.

The MNQP was, for operators, another fun, friendly event.

Local logs included:

Roger Wise, KIØF,	136,166
Tim Jacobson, N9CD,	34,050
Bob Seaquist, W9LSE,	7,646
Len Litvan, AE9LL,	6,708
Dick Konrad, W9JA	2,494

Promote amateur radio Sunday, April 18, by celebrating World Amateur Radio Day. All radio amateurs are invited to take to the airwaves to enjoy our global friendship with other amateurs, and to show our skills and capabilities to the public.



VHF conference in 2022

The Central States VHF Society (CSVHFS) Conference planned for La Crosse 2021 is again being postponed until 2022.

The site for the next "in-person" CSVHFS conference will still be the Radisson in La Crosse Thursday July 21 – July 24, 2022.

The conference should be an event that most Hams, not just VHF-UHF devotees, can really enjoy – in July 2022.

Lone Ranger net saves lives



The *Chattanooga Times Free Press* reports that in the wake of the deaths of two radio amateurs, the Lone Ranger Wellness Net was established to check on members each evening. The radio checks give hams a way to signal if they

need help. The net meets every evening seven days a week. Jim Gifford, KM4MPF, said the Lone Ranger Net was established after one elderly radio operator died of natural causes and another died at his home due to an accident. In both cases, their deaths were not immediately known to friends and family members, he told the newspaper. "Now, if someone in the net fails to check in, they get a text, a phone call, or even a knock on the door to make sure all is okay," Gifford said.

Save your gear from EMP

By Doug McCray, K2QWQ

There is an increasing number of bad actors with EMP (electromagnetic pulse) devices these days and the disruption of the country's electronic infrastructure is tempting. One impulse and your electronic gear is bricked! Many veteran radio amateurs have older V/UHF/HF mobile radios and handhelds; it may be a good idea to store them in a small steel trash can, along with a roll of RG58, mag mount or other kind of antenna, and light line to hoist the antenna into a tree. There is little or no cost involved, and this puts older gear to potential use in an EMP incident.

While not too likely, the military and other government entities do pay attention to the possibility of such an incident that could cripple the internet, power grid, copper pair telephone, and much of the sensitive modern lower voltage circuitry.

Many hams licensed since the end of the cold war may have little or no knowledge of what an EMP blast can do, and how difficult it is to protect against. "When all else fails" means being prepared for the unlikely.

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

WØNE Repeaters

146.640 PL 100.0 Hz *

146.835 PL 131.8 Hz ** FM Voice C4FM Digital

444.225 PL 100.0Hz FM Voice C4FM Digital

442.150 PL 100.0 Hz. FM Voice C4FM Digital

* SkyWarn Net when activated.

** Sundav Nialht Net—8:30 p.m.

Winona Amateur Radio club meetings are 7 p.m., third Thursday of the month on Zoom video conferencing. The monthly program is open to the public.

President: Paul Schumacher, KØZYV, pschumacher@winona.edu

Vice President: Lance Tagliapietra, ADØUT, lancetag@hbc.com

Treasurer: Harro Hohenner, KG6RLM, Harro@hohenner.com

Secretary: Bob Seaquist, W9LSE, seaquist.robe@eagle.uwlax.edu

Custodian: Erik Brom, WBØNIU, ewbrom@hbc.com

At Large: Dan Goltz, WKØW; Clare Jarvis, KØNY

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

The 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 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.

