

The Hamgram

October 2023



TYLER SCOTT, KF0CQX, CLIMBS THE WITOKA TOWER FOR LONG-NEEDED REPAIRS.

More than five year wait

Witoka antennas finally fixed

By Mike Foerster, W0IH

Finally, the 442.150 repeater at Witoka is working much better since two antennas replaced damaged junk at the top of the tower. Users have remarked that the coverage is much better than it ever was. For instance, Mike Cizek, W0VTT, used the repeater from St. Charles with a hand held. Coverage across I-90 improved greatly as well as Highway 61 north. There is a shadow west of Huff St. in Winona to Minnesota City that is caused by Garvin Heights Bluff.

The Winona Amateur Radio Club has five antennas on the Witoka tower: There's the original Hustler G6 dual band antenna for 442.150 located just below the top of the 340' tower; there's a 2 meter Packet repeater on 145.030, connected to this antenna using a diplexer to allow sharing of the antenna and feedline. An antenna at about the 300' level was a 2-meter only antenna and has a second 2-meter packet radio at 145.670. Another 2-meter antenna at about 50' is used as an APRS lgate and digipeater. HBCI has a small dish that provides internet for our HF Remote radio connection to the outside world. Lastly, there is a 900 MHz antenna that will be used to connect our three Yaesu DR-2X repeaters together in the near future.

We've had considerable trouble with the Witoka repeater since about 2018. Paul Degallier, AD0UU, sent his drone up in 2019 that showed us the company that installed the antennas the first time did a poor job, leaving an unterminated splitter cable at the top on both of the coaxes. They also failed to tie the coaxes down, nor did they remove some of the old 220 antenna mounting hardware.

The club purchased two new Hustler G6-270R antennas in



August 2017 to put on the tower but we could not find a tower climber. Finally Tyler Scott, KF0CQX, came to our aid.

Tyler arrived Thursday, Sept. 28 along with Mike Cizek, W0VTT; Dan Goltz, WK0W; and Mike Foerster, W0IH. W0VTT is experienced with tower work, having it as an avocation for many years.

Continued on page 2



TYLER SCOTT, KF0CQX, IMAGE.

A VIEW FROM THE WITOKA TOWER.

Witoka tower project, continued from page 1

The new antennas were tested as Tyler started his climb. The 2M SWR scans showed dip down to about 1.3:1 near the top of the 2 meter band, and 440 was under 1.2:1

across the band. Tyler hooked one end of an 800' rope to his belt that he hauled up along with a pulley. When he was at the top, his tool pack and antennas were attached to the rope and were hoisted to the top. He connected the pulley to the tower and slid a carabiner down to the ground crew where the tools and antennas were hooked up for the long pull up. This took a lot of muscle.

Tyler started his work and threw down the remains of the original Hustler G6, the base and radials. The top radome and internal antenna wire of the antenna were completely gone. The

radome was found days later in the field. No wonder we were having trouble getting into the repeater!



THE NEW WITOKA ANTENNA 'TAKING CALLS.'



MIKE FOERSTER, WØIH, IMAGE.

MIKE CIZEK, WØVTT HOLDS THE REMAINS OF OUR OLD HUSTLER G6 AS IT CAME OFF THE TOWER.

An antenna analyzer for TDR (Time Domain Reflectometer) verified that the 7/8" heliax (hard line coax) up to the antenna works well. The SWR on the 2M and 440 tested nearly the same as they had on the ground.

Several times Tyler announced, "air drop," and would throw something off the tower away from the ground crew. WØVTT would conclude "He hasn't missed yet!" (referring to the ground). One good size clamp buried itself in the dirt.

Tyler was surprised there were no problems with the removal and installation. Apparently, that's unusual!

The two new dual band antennas on the tower allow us to have redundancy for the Witoka repeater. For now, the new lower antenna is still used for packet.



RUSS MARSOLEK, NØQK, IMAGE.

LUKE, KEØMDW, KEVIN, KEØMDX, AND ILLIANA RICKERT, KEØZFU, AT THE MORNING BRIEFING FOR WAUMANDEE TIME TRIALS. MEMBERS OF THE WINONA AMATEUR RADIO CLUB HAVE PROVIDED COMMUNICATIONS SUPPORT AT THE EVENT SEVERAL YEARS.

Cars roared and it rained. Drivers scrambled up Blank Hill Road as quickly as they could, amateur radio operators

monitored their progress, and because of the rain (and lightning) everyone got really wet. It was the annual Waumandee Time Trials, one of the Winona Amateur Radio Club's major public service events.



FATHER-SON TEAM OF AUSTIN, KFØLNB, (LEFT) AND JUSTIN MCELMURY, KFØBSI, READIED THEMSELVES FOR A WET DAY OF RADIO.

The club has provided communication support for the event about four years after event operators discovered Buffalo County's Driftless Region topography with high ridges and tight coulees makes radio difficult. Winona's portable '64 repeater enabled solid handheld communication.

Participants included: Marv Rodvold, AC9TO; Lance Tagliapietra, ADØUT; Kevin Rickert, KEØMDX; Luke Rickert, KEØMDW; Sam Resto, KFØACN; Austin McElmury, KFØLNB; Justin McElmury, KFØBSI; Dan Goltz, WKØW; Nancy Goltz, NØNAN; Russ Marsolek, NØQK; John Kowalik, K2OPT; Illiana Rickert, KEØZFU; Clare



Trials at Waumandee Time Trial



There's a new net in town and it specializes in the hottest emcomm mode, Winlink. Headed by Ben Kuhn, KUØHN, the net "meets" any time Thursdays. Operators send a Winlink message to WØNE (wOne@winlink.org) with the following information:

Subject: Winlink Net Check-In

Email Body: Name, Callsign, City, County, State, Country, Mode (and Gateway if applicable)

On Friday Kuhn will tally the check-ins and send out the results.

"Eventually we will start to do some other activities with it like forms, P2P connections, etc... to get and stay familiar with all the features," Kuhn said. He seeks a name for the net and possibly it's own email group to coordinate.



Annual meeting, elections coming

The Winona Amateur Radio Club doesn't just happen. Seven members conduct the club's business which, in 'olden' days was a nasty burden during regular meetings when members should've had fun.

There will be elections for three executive board members at our November Annual Meeting. You could be one of those elected!

The terms of Harro Hohenner, KG6RLM, Paul Schumacher, KØZYV and Bob Seaquist, W9LSE expire. Nominations are now solicited for presentation at the annual meeting.

A healthy organization requires members to step up and help with the nuts and bolts work. None of it is difficult and incumbents and others are happy to help new officers.



BEN KLINGER, KEØTNM

Klinger honored

Winona County emergency manager Ben Klinger, KEØTNM, has been named Minnesota Emergency Management Director of the Year. Coordination of the search for Madeline Kingsbury as well as extensive work during the pandemic called for Klinger's recognition.

A member of the Winona County Jail staff as well as a volunteer police officer, firefighter and EMT for the city of Goodview, Klinger has been the county's emergency management director since May 2018.

I quit! I want off the Winona Amateur Radio Club executive board!

Am I bitter or angry? Nope.

My time has come and gone. It's time for you to step up. Successful organizations require positive, diverse leadership. This club is successful and you can help lead and give a different slant to the club's direction. That's healthy. Havin' the same old crowd in charge goes nowhere.

Being on the exec board is simple. And important. Step up!

-Bob, W9LSE

Expanded Winlink at October meeting

Winlink was in the spotlight last month; the Winona Amateur Radio Club's Oct. 18 program will expand on Winlink with a show and tell. There will be a built TNC (and a few bare boards as well), a self contained APRS digipeater using that same TNC, a Bluetooth TNC connected to a phone, and a HT that doesn't support APRS transmit APRS with the assistance of those devices.

The meeting is 7 p.m., Thursday, Oct. 19, at the Winona County Office Building, 202 West Third St., Winona or on Zoom.

([https://us06web.zoom.us/j/6881820303?](https://us06web.zoom.us/j/6881820303?pwd=Z0JuRjZlUXJ2U1RMK1BFs3lvUEhsZz09)

[pwd=Z0JuRjZlUXJ2U1RMK1BFs3lvUEhsZz09](https://us06web.zoom.us/j/6881820303?pwd=Z0JuRjZlUXJ2U1RMK1BFs3lvUEhsZz09)

Meeting ID: **688 182 0303**

Password: WarcBoard)



WINONA AMATEUR RADIO CLUB MEMBERS HITCHED A RIDE UP BLANK HILL ROAD WITH JUSTIN MCEL MURY, KFØBSI.

The skills we learn in net operation and in traffic handling transfer to the times we may be asked to support communications for a served agency. For example, use of the ITU phonetic alphabet to spell out names, homonyms, or unfamiliar terms works in formal as well as tactical traffic. Clear sending and accurate receiving are what we offer and what we practice.

Get on the air with contests

You're indoors, the radio is warming the shack and there's a lot of activity on the airwaves. Get on and join in the fun! Even non-contesters ("spit balls") can fight it out with the "Big Guns" in many of the listed events. They, the big guys, want you because you're an additional point. You want to be there because it's fun. Go at your own pace, listen for a while if you're not familiar, then tap the key or key the mic.

Band conditions could not be better.

A couple worth mention are the November Sweepstakes and the 10-Meter Contest.

Nov 2023

- 4-6** ARRL NOVEMBER SWEEPSTAKES – CW
- 12** NORTH AMERICAN SPRINT – SSB
- 18-20** ARRL NOVEMBER SWEEPSTAKES – PHONE
- 25-26** CQ WORLD WIDE DX CONTEST – CW

Dec 2023

- 1-3** ARRL 160-METER CONTEST
- 9-10** ARRL 10-METER CONTEST
- 17** ARRL ROOKIE ROUNDUP – CW

Jan 2024

- 6-7** ARRL RTTY ROUNDUP
- 13-14** NORTH AMERICAN QSO PARTY – CW
- 20-21** NORTH AMERICAN QSO PARTY – SSB

WARC Executive Board (unofficial minutes)

Wednesday, October 4, 2023, via Zoom

Present: Board Members: Lance Tagliapietra, ADØUT; Paul Schumacher, KØZYV; Harro Hohenner, KG6RLM; Bob Seaquist, W9LSE; Mike Foerster, WØIH; Marv Rodvold, AC9TO. Guests: Dan Goltz, WKØW; Tom Wilmot, WØMK; Russ Marsolek, NØQK.

Called to order at 7:03 p.m. by Bob Seaquist, W9LSE.

Minutes (Published in the September Hamgram): Bob Seaquist, W9LSE. *Approved.*

Treasurer: Harro Hohenner, KG6RLM. *Approved*

Balance on 9/1/2023	\$5,772.10
Income:	
Dues:	\$38.00
Expenses:	
Witoka tower climber	\$1,000.00
Balance reported by bank	\$4,772.10
Paid members	34

Donations

General	\$1,775.00
Kenneth Spittler Fund	\$205.00

Public Service: Dan Goltz, WKØW
To date, only two Skywarn nets for the year have been activated.

The county mobile command post trailer is under construction and two months behind schedule.

The full scale county emergency response exercise has not been scheduled.

WKØW and KEØXI attended Winona County Emergency management meetings this past month.

The club's two largest public service events, Ride the Ridges and the Waumandee Time Trials, were successful. Organizers of the events were pleased with the amateur radio

performance. There was good participation, and an opportunity to use technology not routinely used.

Trustee: Mike Foerster, WØIH: With the improved quality of performance of the Witoka Fusion UHF Fusion repeater, there are many options for emergency and public service applications.

Rooster Ridge The repeater acted up Sept. 15 showing a long squelch tail of mostly noise. The squelch was adjusted and the system rebooted. The long squelch tail continues intermittently. The antenna appears to have problems with high SWR. A new antenna could be replaced by Mike Cizek, WØVTT.

MOTION: (KØZYV) purchase new 2M/440 antenna for Rooster Ridge. (Approve)

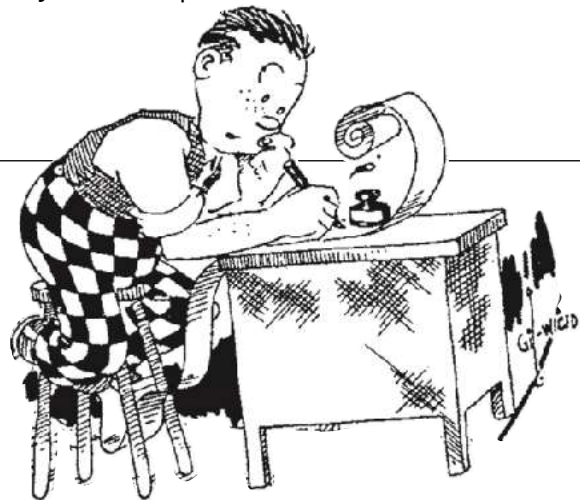
Witoka: A county inspector reported corrections are needed such as a rope wound around a power pole and breaker boxes not fully accessible. A lot of equipment was moved from the shack or thrown out.

Two Hustler G6-270R antennas were placed on the tower Sept. 28 replacing a damaged unit. Coverage reports since then are good.

KAGE Tower:: Sam Resto, KFØACN, is working on the UHF Repeater from the KAGE tower, to determine if the system could be used for the IMRS comms, but it appears that the LAN (network) card is not working.

Winlink Net: Ben Kuhn, KUØHN, has begun a club Winlink Net on Thursdays.

Adjourn: 7:36 p.m.



Dates

- Club meeting, Thurs. Oct. 19
- Sweeps Nov 4
- Skywarn Recognition, Sat. Dec. 2
<http://www.wrh.noaa.gov/mtr/hamradio/>

Hamgram editor sought. Will train. Indicate interest to w9lse@arrl.net.



National Weather Service Skywarn Recognition Day is scheduled from 8 a.m.– 4 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 2, at the La Crosse office, N2788 County Rd FA, La Crosse, WI 54601.

The NWS invites groups and club members that help out with storm spotting to visit that day and help make contacts around the country. There will be radios, antennas, coffee and Sloppy Joes to make contacts with other weather stations and Hams seeking to score points. Volunteers are sought to operate the radios for short stints and log contacts. Even if you can only attend for an hour or two, your help making contacts is wanted.

Protect People, Pets, Pipes, & Plants from cold weather



People

Minimize time outdoors.
Prepare for power outages.
Check on elderly & other vulnerable people to make sure they're ok.



Pets

Keep your pets warm, dry & indoors as much as possible.
Ensure their food & water doesn't freeze.
Limit outside time & keep them bundled up.



Pipes

Insulate pipes if possible.
Open up sink cabinets to expose pipes to heated air.
Disconnect hoses & turn off water to sprinklers.



Plants

Know their temperature thresholds.
If possible, cover them before the cold weather sets in to help retain some heat.

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.

** 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 or Zoom video conferencing. (<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/6881820303?pwd=Z0JuRjZlUXJ2U1RMK1BFS3lvUEhsZz09>

Meeting ID: 688 182 0303

Password: WarcBoard)

The monthly program is open to the public.

President: Lance Tagliapietra, ADØUT, lancetag@hbc.com
Vice President: Elisamuel Resto, KFØACN, sam@samresto.dev
Treasurer: Harro Hohenner, KG6RLM, Harro@hohenner.com
Secretary: Bob Seaquist, W9LSE, seaquist.robe@eagle.uwlax.edu
Custodian: Mike Foerster, WØIH, mchllfrstr@gmail.com
At Large: Marv Rodvold, AC9TO; Paul Schumacher, KØZYV
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, W5735 Woodhollow Rd., Holmen, WI 54636 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.