



OPEN MIC



A NEWSLETTER OF THE
RUNESTONE AMATEUR RADIO CLUB, W0ALX

W0ALX RARC, 2301 S Le Homme Dieu Drive NE, Alexandria, MN 56308
www.w0alx.org Alexandria Rpt: 146.790- 442.025+ (88.5) Sauk Centre Rpt: 147.255+

AUGUST 2015

PRESIDENTIAL SPLATTER.....

Greetings from the Radio Shack of WA0EBZ

Summer is in full swing and it is time for the Runestone Radio Club's annual picnic. It will be held on Tuesday August 18th , 6:00 PM, at the Osagi Park in Osakis. I am providing the following story to help you find your way to the picnic.

On a pleasant spring day, the animals in the woods decided to go for a picnic. "It's a perfect day for a picnic," said the fox delightedly. Soon the animals gathered with their food and the picnic basket was full. All the friends set off towards the park. On the way they came across a stream. "Let's climb that log that has fallen across the stream," suggested the fox. The animals were pleased with the idea and quickly the fox, the rabbits and the porcupine wobbled their way over the log. When the animals reached the park, they found the chipmunks were already there. "How come you two are here so early?" inquired the fox. The chipmunks grinned and said, "We noticed that the log was hollow so we scampered through it along with the picnic basket." "That was clever!" said the rabbits. When the picnic was over, everybody crossed the stream through the hollow log without trouble this time.

73; Wayne

UPCOMING EVENTS:

- Aug 15: 8am Breakfast, The Depot, Alexandria
NO CLUB MEETING FOLLOWING BREAKFAST
- Aug 18: 6pm Annual Picnic, Osagi Park, Osakis
- Aug 29: Tailgate Hamfest, Brainerd
- Aug 29: W/VE Island QSO Party

- Sep 5: 8am Breakfast, Truckers Inn, Sauk Centre
- Sep 12: 10am PICO Net Get-together, Perham
- Sep 12: EMARC Radio Rendezvous, Rush City
- Sep 19: 8am Breakfast, The Depot, Alexandria
- Sep 19: 10am RARC Club Mtg, Glenwood St Bank, Alexandria
- Sep 19-20: Northwest Angle Special Event
CHECK www.w0alx.org for additional events.

We all know how busy summertime is with involvement in family reunions, day and extended trips, recreational activities, visiting relatives, etc. Could you take a few minutes to check in with the Runestone Monday Night Two Meter Net at 7pm on 146.790? The "stand up" folks doing the Net Control function would sure like to hear your voice. At the very least, you'll be assured that your radio/communications setup is working properly and efficiently. It's OK to be a short-timer....cu on the Alex repeater.

2015 RARC OFFICERS/DIRECTORS

PRESIDENT WAYNE WA0EBZ
VICE PRESIDENT NORM W7ISD
TREASURE NORM W0KCJ
SECRETARY JIM KB0INZ

DIRECTOR(2015) NORM W7ISD
DIRECTOR(2016) BILL KG0DX
DIRECTOR(2017) JOHN W0JAR

2015 NET CONTROL ROSTER

JANUARY	N0CE
FEBRUARY	W0KCJ
MARCH	N0RCL
APRIL	KD0UTA
MAY	KB0INZ
JUNE	KG0DX
JULY	KD0MOM
AUGUST	NN0Q
SEPTEMBER	KG0DX
OCTOBER	W0MKE
NOVEMBER	W0KCJ
DECEMBER	KD0AAA (1 st & 3 rd Mon)

Minutes of the Runestone Amateur Radio Club
Radio Club July 18, 2015

Members Present: Jim Horn(KB0INZ); Bill Klundt(KG0DX); Mike Thomas(W0MKE); Roger Haffner(KD0UTA); George Schouweiler(N0RCL); John Ross(W0JAR); Norman Yeutter(W0KCJ); Wayne Johanson(WA0EBZ); Bill Klundt(KG0DX); Andrew Ring(KC0SAL); Wayne Johnson(WB0KUG)

Meeting called to order at 10:00AM by Wayne Johanson

Treasurer's report: \$3607.20 -\$15.00+\$15.00 = \$3607.20 Approved: KG0DX/KD0UTA

Public Information report: The "Osakis Review" did an article about our Field Day, and there is an article pending for the "Browerville Blade".

Old Business:

A discussion about buying a 4:1 balun for the club's antenna was tabled.

A discussion about the need for coax jumpers was tabled.

There has been no contact with the Douglas County Law Enforcement Center.

New Business:

The annual Club Picnic was scheduled for August 18, 2015 6-8PM at Osagi Park in Osakis.

The Wadena Radio Club presented us a proposal to link the Sauk Center 2m repeater to the Bertha 2m repeater using the 70cm radio band. This would create a wide area network running from about Park Rapids to Padua. Our club's consensus was to not do this because of the lack of 70cm capability, the location of the S.C. repeater at the Hospital, and the uncoordinated status of the Bertha repeater. President Johanson will respond to the Wadena Club's president Blake Rickbeil about our decision.

Discussions: USA Islands QSO Party Aug. 29-30; N0RCL's possible Alaska trip for Veterans (George thanked the Bd. Of Directors); The revised Constitution and By-Laws are now posted on the W0ALX website; Operating news; NAQSO Party (CW); August 29th "Tailgate Party" by the Brainerd Club

Adjournment: Norm Yeutter / Andrew Ring (Passed)

How much performance do you really need?

By Dan Romanchik, KB6NU

A reader recently e-mailed me:

"Just a quick question – Are you still in the thinking stage about getting an Elecraft K3? Great rigs, aren't they?"

"What I would like you to think about, though, is how many contacts you log in one year's time. If you log 100 per year (check your log) then your cost will be \$50 per contact for that year. If you log 500, then your cost will be \$10 per contact. If you keep that rig for three years, and log 500 contacts over that time, then you will have spent \$10 per contact.

"Now, consider what that rig will be worth in three years. Will there be something come along that just blows the K3 away in terms of performance?"

I replied:

"K3s are great radios. I've just purchased a used KX3, though, so I am not planning on getting a K3 in the near future. I have purchased a 50-W HobbyPCB amp to use with the KX3, so I'm not going full QRP.

"I make a lot of QSOs/year. My average over the last 13 years is more than three per day, and that doesn't include contacts made with other call signs, such as the club station, or on Field Day. I'm sure that my cost/QSO will be low enough to justify my investment. :)

"In addition, rigs seem to keep their value pretty well. I'd guess that you can sell a three-year-old K3 for at least 80% of what you paid for it. I think that one of the reasons that an Elecraft K3 is worth the investment is that Elecraft provides such good customer support, and that they are continually improving their radios. For example, they just came out with a new synthesizer board, with better RF specs, for the K3.

"I don't see anyone coming out with a radio that blows the K3 away in terms of performance in the near future, although I might be wrong. FlexRadio has perhaps the best chance of doing that, but you'll have to buy into the Flex user interface philosophy to take advantage of that. I think that Elecraft and Flex, plus the three Japanese manufacturers, will make incremental performance improvements over the coming years, leapfrogging one another as they bring out new models.

"One thing to think about is how much performance is overkill? Just like you can now buy a computer that has way more computer power than the average user will ever need, I think that most of these high-end radios offer way more performance than the average ham will ever need. It's cool to look at the Sherwood Engineering receiver tests and see that your rig is in the top ten, but will the average ham actually notice the difference? My guess is probably not.

"Thanks for sparking my thought process on these issues."

My guess is that most amateur radio operators don't think about what the rig will be worth in three years when buying an HF transceiver. Instead, they're looking at what the radios that are currently available cost, and when there's a big price difference between two models that appeal to them, they're trying to figure out if the higher price is warranted. In many cases, the lower-priced model wins out. It's not because the more expensive radio isn't better, but it's not that much better.

It all goes back to how much performance you actually need. Yes, you can probably do more with a \$10,000 radio than you can with a \$1,500 radio, but is it really worth the added expense? In other words, are you going to have more fun with a \$10,000 radio than you are with a \$1,500 radio?

NOTE:

- 1. AUG 15: 8AM BREAKFAST AT DEPOT**
- 2. AUG 15: NO CLUB MTG AT 10AM**
- 3. AUG 18: CLUB PICNIC AT OSAGI PARK IN OSAKIS, WILL BE ALONG THE LAKESHORE WHERE WE WERE LAST YEAR**

CU THEN.....