



Official Publication of the
West Allis Radio Amateur Club

Hamtrix

[click here to go to web site](#)

Volume 73, Issue 2 February , 2024

FEBRUARY CLUB HAPPENINGS



NUT NET
3.985mhz
Monday-Saturday
8:15am CT
NUT NET
Breakfast
8:30am fourth
Tuesday
of the month

**The Milwaukee-Florida Net
time is:**
7:15 – 8:00AM Central
8:15 – 9:00AM Eastern
Mon through Sat

Meeting
February,13, 2024 7pm
New Berlin Community Center
14750 W. Cleveland Ave.
New Berlin, WI
Between Moorland and Sunnyslope
Presentation
Wisconsin QSO party

Premeeting dinner
New Berlin Ale House 5:15pm
16000 W. Cleveland Ave
West of Moorland Rd.



**March
10,
2024**

[Click for more
info](#)

Mark your Calendar
Sendik's Grill fundraiser dates
May 18,2024
September 7, 2024
At the New Berlin store

Index

Meeting Minutes	3	Survival radio.....	9
Contest & DX.....	4	Thoughts.....	10
Digital Digest.....	6	From the Editor.....	12
Winter Field Day.....	8	Slow Speed CW net...	13



WARAC Find Us On The Air

VHF Simplex 146.55 Mhz



Looking for a Club Member to chat with? Fire up the VHF rig and give a shout out on the VHF Simplex Frequency 146.55. You'll be surprised how often someone is listening. Hit the PTT and say "Hello"

DMR - BM TG 3155 WI State



The WI State 3155 TG is available on all the local DMR Repeaters AND via your HotSpot. Put yourself monitoring and come find a Club Member

Nut Net - Mon to Sat on 3.985 Mhz @ 8:15 AM



Join The Nut Net on 80 Mtr SSB from 8:15 to 9:00 AM Mondays thru Saturdays. Check-ins are from all over WI. You'll be a Nut Netter regular in no time. This is a general discussion net that gets your day started out right.

Milw - Florida Net - Mon to Sat 14.290 Mhz 7:00 AM



Join Tom, K9BTQ, for this early morning Check In Net, Mon thru Sat on 20M from 7:00 AM to 8:00 AM. Get the news to get your day started out just right.

6 Meter Chat - Wed, Fri 50.160 Mhz @ 9:30 AM



Paul, W9PCS, hosts this informal 6m online get together on Wed and Fri starting at 9:30 AM. This is a round table discussion and everyone is welcome to drop by and join in.

WARAC Social – January 16, 2024

Pizza Man
11500 W Burleigh St
Milwaukee, WI 53222

Attendance: 21 – 15 Members, 6 Visitors

Respectfully Submitted
Bill Dargis KD9BJZ
Secretary WARAC, January 16, 2024



Contest Corner and DX Report

The downside of the dark, cold days of winter? Lots of great contests on the air. **Here's what to look for in February.**

QSO Party season got underway the weekend of February 3 and 4, with the Vermont, Minnesota, and British Columbia events.

On February 10 and 11, the main event is the CQ WW RTTY WPX contest. Gosh. So many letters. Let's break it down. CQ refers to CQ Magazine, a publication which once published a paper magazine and may again in the future, but is not publishing at the moment. I theoretically am a subscriber, but I have not seen an issue in over a year. WW is "Worldwide", since this contest has no specific geographic focus. RTTY is Radio Teletype, and while very few people use a teletype machine on the air anymore, since it is not 1963, when you could. (Fun fact: when you take kid hams to swapfests, people give them stuff for free. This is why Max has a teletype machine.) And WPX tells you about this specific contest, which is "Working all prefixes". Your score is your QSO points times the number of valid call sign prefixes worked. (The prefix is generally the first one or two letters, followed by the number, in a call sign. There are copious exceptions, of course.) If you've operated RTTY before, you definitely want to give this one a shot. If you haven't, it does take some setup beforehand to get your computer ready to contest in this mode, but if you can operate any other digital modes, you are halfway there, because your computer and radio are already interfaced correctly. RTTY is really a lot of fun and I think you should give it a try.

Speaking of digital, the PODXS 070 Club Valentine Sprint is on Wednesday, February 14th, for the entire (UTC) day. PODXS is a club promoting the use of PSK modes on the air, and they are extremely welcoming to newcomers. It is fun to see a lot of PSK activity on the air, so jump in if you can. There is still more RTTY for the North American QSO Party on February 24th, from noon to midnight our time. The focus is (obviously) on the US and Canada, but the bands should be chock full of loud stations.

It's not all digital in February, though – the ARRL International DX Contest runs for 48 hours February 17 and 18 (CW) and then on March 2 and 3 (phone), and the bands will be packed with loud DX. Even from my little station with my little antenna, I can work a bunch of European stations on 15 and 20 meters. CW speeds tend to be pretty fast for this event. And then bookending the month with QSO parties, the South Carolina event is on February 24th and the North Carolina event is on February 25th.

You might think weekdays are quieter for contesting, and while you're right, there are some gems you shouldn't miss. There is the Phone Weekly Test, a 30 minute scramble on Wednesday nights, and the NCCC Sprint, at the same time (8:30-9:00 PM) on Thursday nights, but on CW instead of phone. These are Sprint events – meaning that once a station calls CQ and someone answers them, the CQing station gives up the frequency to the station who answered them. If you've never tried it before, it's weird. There is a rhythm and a skill to it, a skill I have not developed yet, though I do sometimes try. These events are fun, extremely fast paced, and short.

Continued next page

DJ (Mauritius) will be on the air from February 20-27 on 40 to 10 meter CW and FT8.

- **TX0QRP (Tahiti)** will be operating QRP (surprisingly) from February 28 to March 3, mostly CW, some FT8.
- FW8GC and TX8GC (Wallis and Futuna islands), from February 19 to March 9, will be on the air, 160-10 meters, all modes.
- There is a team that will be active from Fiji, Samoa, and Tonga throughout most of February. Check <http://www.yt1ad.info/pac24/> for details.
- Do you need Reunion island? FR4AV is on the air from February 4-11, 40 meters and up, CW, and SSB.
- CB0ZA (Juan Fernandez Islands) in the South Pacific can be had from February 13-20, 160 meters and up, all modes including 6 and 2 meter EME. More info at <http://cb0za.com>.

Let me know your DX and contest tips, and I'll include them here.

-Michael AA9RK

MRAC FM Simplex Contest

Michael Falk, AA9RK

If you are available on **Sunday, February 25th**, there is a local contest from 1-4 PM, and it would be great to hear some club members on the air. It is the MRAC FM Simplex Contest, designed to encourage FM simplex operation on 6 meters, 2 meters, 220 MHz, 440 MHz, and on digital voice modes. The first hour of the contest is strictly for operation on 2 meters, and then each half hour afterward is for a different band.

All you need to do is exchange your grid square with the other station, and then you can log them for the contest. You can log simply on paper or with a spreadsheet, or the N3FJP VHF contest log also works well. (Since the exchange is just the grid square, I suspect that using N1MM+ set up for any of the ARRL VHF Contests would also work.)

Finally, remember to send in your log! There is a club competition and it would be great to bolster WARAC's score. Check out the Milwaukee Radio Amateur Club's website at w9rh.org for more details. Let me know if you're going to be on the air, and I will be sure to QSO with you.



February 2024 * Hamtrix * By Michael Johnson, WO9B

SHARI Allstar Node

The **Allstar Link Network** is yet another internet backbone network that has been on my list to get familiar with for some time now. It is anything but the new kid on the block, but rather has been around long enough to qualify as “legacy” and is based on the Open Source Asterick PBX software. That’s right, at its core this is repurposed telephone communications software implemented on a Linux server network. For amateur radio, the Allstar Link Network is a central server based system which manages a whole lot of linux/Raspberry Pi nodes. From this simple premise of node to node connections, all sorts of magic happens as these nodes take on different roles and capabilities. Nodes can be an individual ham callsign, a vhf/uhf repeater, a wide area repeater system, a connection point for regional communication, a connection point for a private network system, a crosslink between Allstar and other digital networks like DMR/Fusion/D-Star.... so really just about anything you can dream up. Ain’t it great?

Allstar can be a pretty big system to wrap your head around. Its wide capabilities and versatile utilization can be daunting. For me, I was attracted to the ability to put standard VHF/UHF radios to use to access the system. Getting down to the grits, I wanted to be able to operate with my good old dual band HT running low power into several local VHF repeaters as well as access a couple of favorite DMR Talk Groups. Running ½ watt from an HT in my basement generally means I’m not going to hit the local repeaters. Allstar changes the equation and now not only can I get in, the quality of my signal is top notch. Same on receive.

This magic was accomplished by building and putting on the air a **SHARI Node**. It is exactly like a hotspot and operates as a simplex modem which connects your analog radio to the Allstar Link Network. The one I picked up is as pictured here. It came as a kit which was assembled in an hour or two. Very simple. For a few shekels more, you can buy the node completely assembled. You need to add a Raspberry Pi to the kit to make it functional. Downloading and installing the Allstar software was fairly easy but took an afternoon. With experience, I think it would take about an hour. Typical learning curve.



It has been up and running for a month now. No glaring issues and the connections have been really good. As mentioned above, I use it to access a couple of local repeaters, but also check-in to a couple of nets on far flung locals. It is really quite fun.

BONUS TOPIC: Hey, spring is just around the corner which means 6 meters is getting active. Thanks to **K0NR** a updated book has just been made available: **Band Magic Revealed** from K5ND. Free download or pickup the paperback on Amazon.



Nut Net Breakfast

Several years ago there was talk among Nut Net members that we should get to meet each other. A breakfast get together idea was started. It was open to all hams, XYL/partners and anyone who wanted to learn about amateur radio. Even visiting OM/XYL couples joined us.

So, on the fourth Tuesday each month at 8:30 am we meet at Gensis Restaurant, corner of HWY 100 and Beloit Road, Greenfield, WI. Looking forward to seeing you, mark your calendar.

Phil, W9NAW

2024 Challenge for our membership. Have someone you meet, Ham or Ham wannabe come to a meeting this year!

Swap Corner

If you have something ham related you are looking for or you would like to sell or give away. I would be happy to post them in Hamtrix

Editor

ELMER

by Rich Regent, K9GDF



Winter Field Day 2024

Michael Falk, AA9RK

Our mission, should we choose to accept it: Set up a working amateur radio station, outdoors, in the winter, in Wisconsin.

The goals: Deploy an antenna (two if possible), set up a radio, and make contacts on three different bands and three different modes. Keep the radio dry. Avoid hypothermia and frostbite. Make friends. Emerge with smiles on our faces.

The team:



Max KD9NZB

Years licensed: 4
Number of robots built: 1
Number of states confirmed
on the air: 42

Brayden KD9YVG

Years licensed: ½
Number of robots built: 1
Number of hours on HF
before today: 1
Enthusiasm: Infinite



Michael AA9RK

Years licensed: 29 (can that be
right?)
Number of past Winter Field
Days operated: 4
Number of robots built: 0

The location: Lions Legend Park, Franklin. Famous for: being the most recent place I got my Spark Plug EFHW stuck in the tree at a Wednesday park activation. The golf ball is still there, I think.

The rules: FT8/FT4 are not allowed, and the number of QSOs is multiplied not by sections worked but by band/mode combinations worked. They place a premium not on working a variety of geographic areas, but on using multiple means of communication. There are bonus points for operating outdoors, operating on emergency power, being set up away from home, deploying multiple antennas, and for using at least 6 bands.

The setup: Yaesu FT-991, 30 watts output into the EFHW. Laptop logging with N3FJP, and digital modes with fldigi. All of this was run from our Bioenno 15 Ah LiFePO4 battery and the laptop's internal battery.

The operation: Max was going to show Brayden how to make PSK QSOs, then they were going to contact as many stations as they could. Max interfaced fldigi with the N3FJP API so that when we

made a PSK contact, it automatically logged it... and this actually worked on the first try. They made some contacts on 40 meters and then switched over to 20. After they got tired of that, Brayden and I switched over to phone, and after I demonstrated a few QSOs, I turned him loose. That worked on the first try, too. We worked the midwest on 40 meters, the west coast on 15 meters, and everything in between on 20 meters. Since making at least one QSO on a band and mode counts as a new multiplier, I made one quick CW contact on each of 15, 20, and 40 meters.

Deploying the antenna was a challenge in the slush and mud, so I decided against putting up a second antenna. My wife Courtney and son Elliott stopped by to see us – they were in the neighborhood – and we also met new friends, visitors Scott N9SAT and Sandy N9SJT.

After all was said and done, we were on the air for about two hours and ended up with 25 QSOs (9 PSK31, 13 SSB, 3 CW). There were 8 band/mode combinations (15m SSB and CW; 20m PSK, SSB, and CW; 40m PSK, SSB, and CW). We successfully avoided hypothermia, kept the radios dry, and emerged wanting more. We worked predominantly indoor/home stations, but found a few other outdoor stations braving the elements. See you next time?



Demographics & Us

Tom Langer de KD9FPC

January 23, 2024

No doubt you are wondering what demographics has to do with ham radio. As I was writing an article for one of the magazines I write for, the research required that I get lots of statistics together on demographics. As I reviewed the notes a little light bulb came on in my head. A rare occurrence for sure. Anyway, it was obvious this has a lot to do with ham radio. Please read on...

We'll get the statistics out of the way right away;

Silent & pre-1928: make up about 19 million people and hold about 11% of the assets

Baby Boomers (a lot of us): make up about 69 million people and hold about 48% of the assets

Gen X: 65 million people and 29% of the assets

Millennials: 72 million people and are about 12% of the assets

Gen Z: 70 million people and given that many are in school or may just be getting a start, assets totally unknown

Generation Alpha: (born 2010 to 2024) about 38.6 million people.

Since the 1960's the per family count went from 2.4 kids per family to 1.9 in 2022.

In the 1960's the average number of kids to 100 women 15-44 year old was 12, now it's 6. Finally, people are waiting longer to get married and as such, are older at the birth of the first child.

At this point we could begin waxing on about politics, the economy, the pandemic and who knows what else. But in the end it would make little difference in the discussion. The reasons we should be concerned relative to the future of ham radio is simply;

- There are fewer people, who have less money. And from the millennials and younger are following different paths for communication, i.e. social media, cellphones, emails, texts you name it, but not ham radio or the code.

When I was a kid I took up ham radio because that's what my dad did. He was a Merchant Marine Academy grad who could not graduate without knowing ham radio and the code, seaman turned Navy officer lent to the Air Force then back to the Navy. All along he had a Heathkit/military surplus set up on an end fed out the window. Later, there was a mobile radio with a whip antenna on his car.

The years went by. The old saw. Family, Boy Scouts, work and coaching took most of my time and focus, not radio. I retired due to an illness in 2015. Looking and thinking about the various hobbies, ham radio was the clear winner. Good thing too. In 2022 had a whole bunch of surgery and have been disabled since.

The reason for bringing that up is that one could assume it has happened for each of us too. We may have learned radio early on, but then went silent for many years. Along comes retirement for whatever reason and we start looking for things to do. We find our way back to radio.

But wait, as the commercials say. What have we learned? In summary, there are fewer people behind us as a group, with far fewer dollars. And if they don't start saving fast and hard they'll not have a retirement with the demise of "pensions" for many. Now pension = 401k. And with gobs of money, and the amount required

just to be even to 3 years ago going up 17%+, spent on transportation, home, child care, food and more, far smaller amounts are heading into 401k's, IRA's and the lot.

Now a tough question for us. Did we share a love for radio with our kids and grandkids? Do they know the magic and wonder of sending a message into the "ether" to someone across the country or world? And then hearing something back. Or teach them some characters for Morse Code? Take them to field days? There will be many things competing for their dollars and interest when, and if, the time comes they might retire.

In all of this there is some really good news. After talking to a few people given a chance to look the numbers over, and we hammers have both a desire to talk and opine hihi, the following are recommended steps offered;

It is not too late! We have equipment. Our folks had boat anchors that again became all the rage. Have you asked any or all of your kids if they wish to inherit a working shack? I was surprised to find that is true in my case.

Attract some younger people. Show them FT8, and all of the forms of digital radio along with voice. And if they choose to try digital, don't grumble and make comments about "real" radio. They'll find their path. It's a short jump from cell phone to FT8. Works great linking it to STEM classes and kids. Bet the teachers would love your involvement and a live demonstration of all radio offers.

Invite grandkids into the shack. I was very surprised that my little 8 month old grandchild loves to come spend time with me in the shack. Let him chew on the mouse mat, turn some dials and knobs and practice a little "code". The older grandkids love it too. The five year old already knows some code characters. All you have to do is invite. And, it is immensely easier to bring them in one at a time.

You no doubt get the idea. We all have a stake in this game. The future of ham radio depends on us now. And, please never forget, ham radio is far more about the people than the equipment. These kids and adults up thru 50 will not know the joy we have experienced unless we take the first step. Now.



Winter Field Day

From the Editor

February is the month of preparing for the WI QSO party. Our team (Mike WO9B , Micheal AA9EK and me KA9FZR) have been doing mobile during the party. We have had a lot of fun doing it. We will see how this year goes. The last couple years goal is to get to the Bosch pub at the end of the contest. We have had good luck doing that.

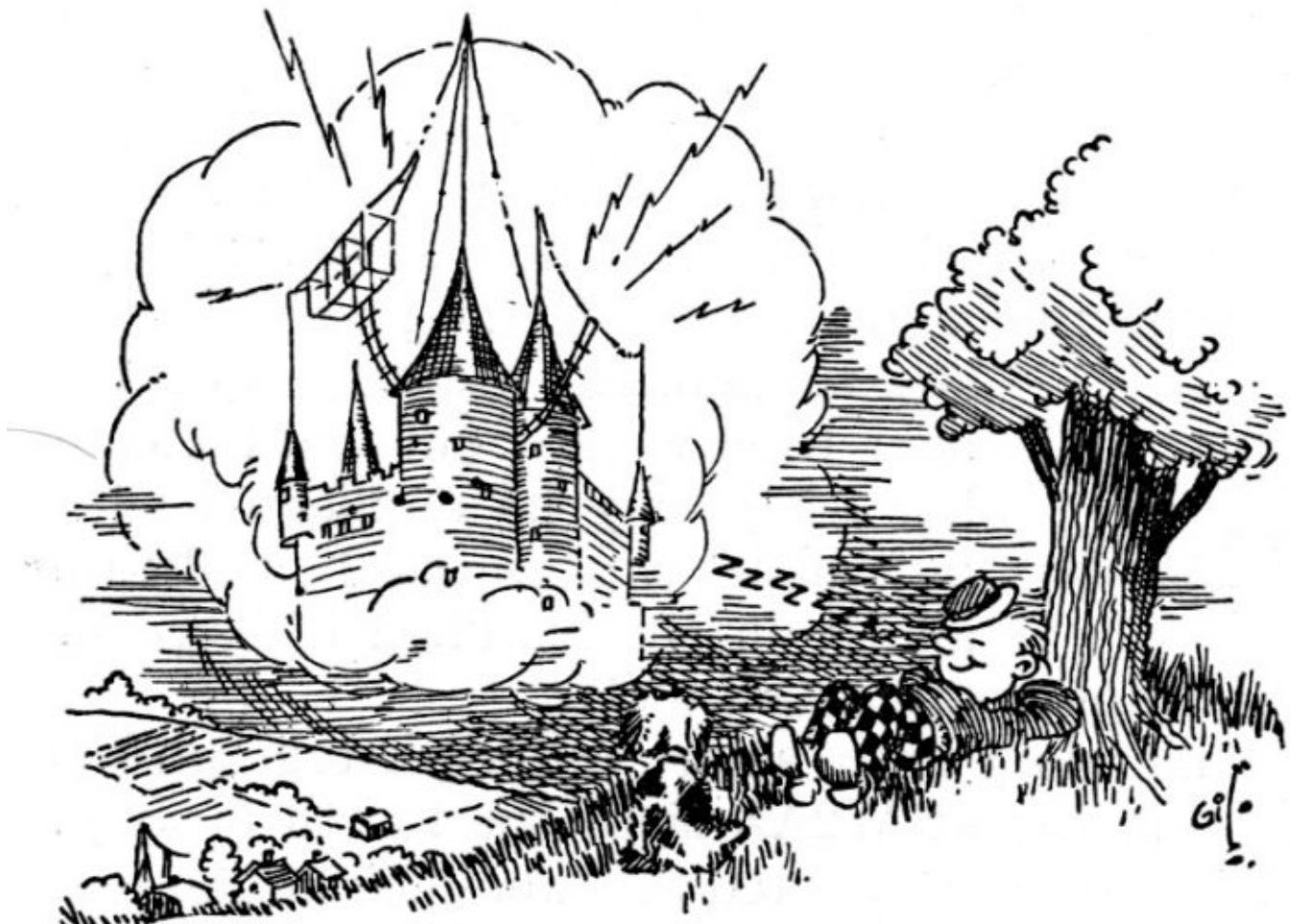
I have one more option to add to the old screwdriver antenna. We'll see if it helps or is more trouble than it's worth.

I took my radio's on our New Orleans bus tour, just in case an opportunity came up to use one. I remember reading old ham radio stories about Hams setting up in hotel rooms and having fun. I think some of those stories involved tuning up to bed springs Hi HI. Different now. No bed springs, windows are all sealed. Outside, at least at some of the newer places, is mostly parking lot. I may have to come up with new stories of operating out of hotels!

Years ago I did have one success operating out of a motel room. I was in Los Angeles at a factory school. Of course this was a wood building, only one story high. I put up a 15 meter dipole in my room and set up the Heath kit HW-8 which my Elmer and me had scheduled to talk. Much to our surprise we were able to hookup for a short QSO. Remember a HW-8 puts out about 1.5 watts I still like QRP.

73

Frank KA9FZR



53rd Annual

Madison Hamfest

Sponsored by **MARA**, the Madison Area Repeater Association
A Non-Profit Organization

Saturday April 13, 2024
8:00 AM until 12:00 PM

The MARA Hamfest features vendors of new and used equipment for Amateur Radio, Electronics, Computers, computer parts and software. Come see our huge Flea Market in the Mandt Community Center's spacious 26,000 sq ft main hall.

VE testing starts at 10:00 AM.

Vendor space is sold on a "first come, first served bases"

Location: Mandt Community Center (Same location since 2000)
GPS: North 42.91157 West 89.21647
Address: 400 Mandt Parkway, Stoughton, Wisconsin
Directions: Take US Hwy 51 South from Madison to downtown Stoughton, WI.
Turn South on 4th Street and the Mandt Center is 3 blocks ahead on the left
Talk in: MARA's Wide Area Repeater 147.150 MHz (+600) p1123.0
Parking: Free
Seller Setup: Friday night 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM and Saturday morning, 6:00 AM

Ticket, Table and Chair Prices

Tables are limited to availability!

Hamfest general admission tickets:	Purchased on website	\$8.00 per person
Ages 12 and younger: FREE	At the door <u>CASH ONLY!</u>	\$10.00 per person
Eight-foot vendor table fees	Purchased by March 25	\$ 20.00
Admission tickets are NOT included	After March 25	\$25.00
In the price of tables		
Chairs		\$ 5.00
AC Service		\$ 30.00
Admission ticket along with table rental is <u>Required</u>		<u>At the door is CASH ONLY</u>

MARA is not responsible for theft or damage. All orders are final – No refunds.

Hamfest tickets, and vendor table space can be purchased at the MARA website: www.w9hsy.org If you have questions about purchasing tickets, chairs, table space. Please check the web page or contact us by e-mail at hamfest@w9hsy.org

Hamfest 2024

Buy/Sell Amateur Radio Equipment, Electronics and Computer Gear



Sunday
March 17, 2024



Free Parking!

ADVANCE SALES: Admission: \$8 8' Table Space - \$15/ea
AT THE DOOR: Admission: \$10 8' Table Space - \$25/ea

Amateur Volunteer Exams starting at 9:30 AM

— By Appointment Only —

You **MUST** contact the Club at TCARC@W9MQB.org in advance to make an appointment OR register online. Your FRN Number is Required

Presented by: TRI-COUNTY AMATEUR RADIO CLUB - W9MQB

Talk-in on the 145.49- Repeater (CTCSS 123.0)

JEFFERSON COUNTY FAIR PARK
ACTIVITY CENTER
503 NORTH JACKSON AVE.
JEFFERSON, WI 53549

- Vendors will be admitted at 6:30 AM
- Vendors-only unloading zone on West side
- Food and beverages available
- General Admission and Sales begin at 8:00AM



Take I94 to Exit 267 (Johnson Creek), Head South on 26 to the Hwy 18 Exit. Exit East on Hwy 18 and turn left onto Jackson Ave. Look for the Fair Park sign.



Next year's date: March 16, 2025

Register online at <https://www.W9MQB.org/SwapFest>

Mail-In Registration Form

Admission: _____ X \$8.00 = \$ _____ Note: Table Reservation does not include Admission.

8' Tables: _____ X \$15.00 = \$ _____ Total Amount Enclosed: \$ _____

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Email: _____ Call Sign: _____

Street: _____

City _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Mail-In Reservations require that we receive your payment BY MARCH 1st with a self-addressed, stamped envelope at:

TCARC Hamfest 2024, P.O. Box 321, Fort Atkinson, WI 53538

Questions ? Call Michael Zore (AE9MZ) at 414-455-5493 or Email: hamfest@w9mqb.org

DON'T KEY LIKE A PHONE MAN



SLOW SPEED CW QSO NET

Monday's - 8:00 PM - WBOAFB Repeater 147.045 + 127.3 Tone

CW Practice

One of the best and maybe the only way to get better at CW is practice. Having someone else who also wants to practice also helps. Just makes it more fun.

The West Allis Radio Club is going to try to help. We are running a CW practice net on Monday at 8pm The repeater is 147.045+ 127.3 the CW portion is on HF

Mike WO9B has been joining me and setting up some practice but we are open for suggestions on where to go with this. Come join us.

Officers and Board
President
FEROZ GHOUSE WU9N

Vice President
MikeJohnson WO9B

Secretary
William Dargis KD9BJZ

Treasurer
Bill Reed N9KPH

Directors
Tom Macon K9BTQ
Erwin von der Ehe Wi9EV

Newsletter Editor
Frank Humpal, KA9FZR
fhump@milwpc.com

past president
Frank Humpal KA9FZR

West Allis Radio Amateur Club
P. O. box 511381
New Berlin, WI 53151-1381

West Allis Radio Club
PO Box 511381
New Berlin, WI 53151-1381