



Official Publication of the
West Allis Radio Amateur Club

Hamtrix

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

Volume 72, Issue 12 December , 2023

DECEMBER 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
December,12, 2023 7pm
New Berlin Community Center
14750 W. Cleveland Ave.
New Berlin, WI
Between Moorland and Sunnyslope
Presentation
Dave Garnier WBOWN
demonstrating his spectrum analyzer.

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

**No Nutnet breakfast
this month**
See you next year

Index

Meeting Minutes3
contest &DX.....4
Digital Digest..... 6
Don't Look so Sad.....8

10 Meter Contest.....9
From the Editor.....10
Blonde QRM.....11
From the President.12
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 General Meeting Minutes – November 14, 2023

Called to order by Feroz WU9N @ 7pm.

Attendance: 26 – 23 Members, 3 Visitor.

Feroz WU9N: - did intro's.

October General & Board Meeting Minutes: - Approved.

Treasury Report – Bill N9KPH: Checking \$5,688.00, Gen CD \$5,000.00, Scholarship CD \$12,128.00.

December - Dave Garnier WB9OWN will demonstrate his spectrum analyzer.

January - No meeting. We have our Annual Holiday gathering at the Ale House.

February – Getting ready for WIQSO Party in March.

Dave Garnier WB9OWN Will spearhead head Field Day. Feroz - DJ Mackie is a great site, but is in the middle of nowhere. And has issues with power. Maybe look for somewhere closer.

Feroz: Board proposed 2 possible activities for the club.

1. To have the club organize and present some type of symposium in 2025 for the Ham's in the area. Feroz is in the position to have has access to WCTC auditorium and 4+ meeting areas for a reasonable price and may know of possible sponsors. Middle of January before swap-fest season starts. Ideas ~\$10 registration fee, half a day. What topics, amount of time for each. Still in the dreaming stage. Need to put together a committee to brainstorm and report back its progress to membership. Maybe do a survey to see what may be of interest. Will bring up again in December.

2. WCTC lost their Ham shack and Ham radio club. WCTC has a new president that want to involve the community. Feroz wants to take to WCTC president of the school and ask if he open to us restarting WCTC radio club in collaboration with WARC club, mentoring the club. So we become their elmers.

Phil: Talked about Nut-net breakfast, 4th Tuesday of the month.

Frank will take care of setting up Sendik's dates for 2024.

Scholarship: Howard contacted the Arrl with the Boards changes to the scholarship terms. And found that the Arrl charges a 1% of the endowment, as an administrative fee.

Mike WO9B: Is still working on and testing our new website.

Dave WB9OWN: Presentation on – Pacemaker used to control bowel issues. The pacemaker is programmed to stimulate a sequence of points in the bowel to control issues. The pacemaker is controlled with your cell phone. The device is registered, the user has a card to show when going through metal detectors.

Feroz talked about EchoLink. To connect to repeaters around the world, using a computer or cell phone. You must be a licensed Ham, be registered with echolink.com.

Meeting Adjourned at 8:22 pm.

Respectfully Submitted

Bill Dargis KD9BJZ

Secretary WARAC, November 14, 2023

Contest Corner and DX Report

Happy December to you! The month kicked off with the ARRL's 160 Meter Contest, for those who have the real estate for Top Band antennas.

On the first weekend of the month, December 9 and 10 UTC, the show stopper is the **ARRL 10 Meter Contest**. Mike WO9B has an excellent introduction to this contest elsewhere in Hamtrix this month.

December 16 and 17 bring us the Croatian DX Contest, the OK RTTY DX Contest, and the ARRL Rookie Roundup CW Contest. The Rookie Roundup is an interesting one; it is aimed at hams licensed three years or less, or hams who have never made contacts on CW before. For those of us who are old timers (licensed longer than three years!), the best thing we can do is get on the air to make QSOs with rookies, or to host them at our stations or assist them during the contest.

The weekend of the 23rd and 24th is fairly quiet, but there are two events I would really like to spotlight on the weekend of the 30th and the 31st. One is the Radio Amateurs of Canada Winter Contest, one of my favorite events of the year. It runs for 24 hours, the entire UTC day on December 30th. Anybody can work anybody, but we non-Canadians get 2 points for each other non-Canadian we work, 10 points for each Canadian, and 20 points for each of the official RAC stations in each call area. (VE1RAC, VE2RAC, and so on.) You can use CW and phone, from 160 up through 2 meters. CW speeds are moderate, operators are friendly (they are Canadian, after all!), and the activity level is good. The multipliers are the 13 provinces and territories, once per band per mode.

The other contest I want to highlight runs concurrently with the second half of the RAC contest, and it is the YOTA (Youth On The Air). The exchange is your age, and the multipliers are all of the different ages of operators you work per band. You get more QSO points for working youth operators: working operators over age 25 is worth 1 point on your own continent and 3 points across continents. Working ops age 22-25 is worth 10 points, 17-21 is worth 11 points, 13-16 is worth 12 points, and 12 and younger is worth 13 points per QSO. (If Max gets on the air for this one, he'll be a popular guy. He doesn't turn 13 until next summer.)

It's not a contest exactly, but Straight Key Night is New Year's Eve and New Year's Day. (It's the entire UTC day on January 1, to be precise.) I don't generally get on the air for this one, as I'm usually hosting a party that night and also I'm not exactly a Straight Key aficionado.

Looking ahead to January 2024, the first weekend brings the ARRL RTTY Roundup and Kids Day. RTTY contesting is a lot of fun, once you get over some of the barriers to entry (primarily, software that isn't intuitive to use, or, if you are more old school than I am, actual teleprinters). Using your ears AND your eyes is the best way to tune in RTTY signals, and there will be lots on the air. Kids Day is a more laid back event than the YOTA contest, designed to allow third parties to have an easy and fun time on the air, even if they are very young.

There will be installments of the North American QSO Party on the second (CW) and third (SSB) weekends in January, plus the January VHF Contest on the third weekend as well. Less propagation enhancement, plus ice and snow and cold, and yet stations get out and make a ton of contacts on 50 MHz and above. The fourth weekend brings Winter Field Day, which is idiosyncratic enough to deserve a whole column of its own. Get ready!

Continued next page

On the DX side, there are two notable DXpeditions running now, with some other interesting calls on the air.

- **T32TT, Kiritimati Island**, starts this week with 12 digital stations (!!), 2 CW, and 1 phone, through December 28th. You'll need to use Fox and Hounds mode in FT8 to QSO with them in that mode.

- **V6EU, Chuuk Island in Micronesia**, is the other big DXpedition this month, on the air through December 16th, all modes, all HF bands.

- **VK0DS is a big deal from Davis Station, Antarctica**. Dave VK2DS is spending a year there, operating HF through 6 meters, and is also doing some VHF/UHF moonbounce. I can't imagine the amount of gear he must have hauled from Australia to do all of this. (And as a single operator!)

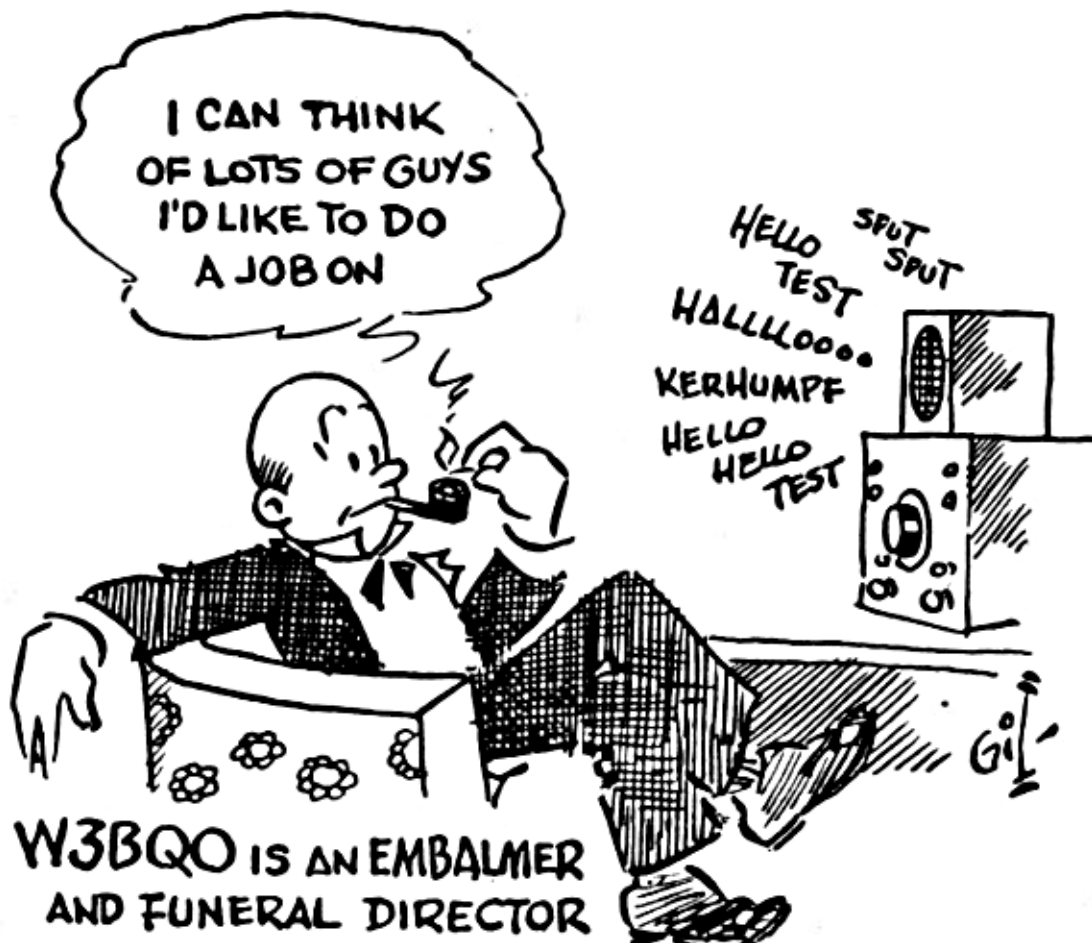
- **YB9/DL3KZA is active from Lombok and Sumbawa Island** in Indonesia until December 18th, SSB and FT8.

- **Honduras is on the air again, with HR5/F2JD** on the air through the winter and into the spring.

- **FH4VVK**, from Mayotte Island (Northwest of Madagascar), has been active and is operating through April.

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

-Michael AA9RK





December 2023 * Hamtrix * By Michael Johnson, WO9B

Digital Updates

As we close out the year, two significant developments to our digital radio footprint are worth noting. OK, true enough that I am a bit biased, but still, these are big deals.

Significant Development #1: Winlink VARA FM VHF in the Milwaukee Metro is Up and Running.

After a year of effort, the goal to provide 24/7 VARA FM Winlink service to MKE is online. Admittedly I am a Winlink fanboy, but to my amazement the MKE area had limited VARA FM VHF service a year ago. I was fortunate to link up with Mark, AC9DE at some point and with his determined help and drive we now have (3) 24/7 Winlink VARA nodes on the air (and the internet) serving all of MKE county and near-in western suburbs. All three stations are on the same frequency, 145.610 simplex and operate with VARA FM. They are all digipeater capable. The nodes are:

- AC9DE-10 (Narrow Mode)
- WO9B-10 (Wide Mode)
- WI9HRO-10: (Narrow Mode)

Mark, AC9DE, was the main driver in securing and setting up the WI9HRO-10 node, which is the HRO Employee's Club Station. HRO was very helpful in making this happen. Our mantra in carrying out this project was "Just Build It". So it is up and running and ready to be of service to the MKE ham community. We are open to further integration with ARES and other users as well as individual hams. If you have any questions or ideas, both Mark and myself are all ears. We are both good in QRZ so, let the data fly!!

Significant Development #2: Good Bye Symbol Rate Limitations. On November 13th, the [ARRL released an announcement](#) that the FCC had finally put an end to the antiquated Symbol Rate criteria which had been a choke on digital communications in our hobby. Instead, with a tip of the hat to current digital modulation/encoding techniques, a 2.8 kHz bandwidth limitation has been imposed for the HF bands. For those with an interest in data transmission modes, this is a very big deal. With this change, the US joins the "rest" of the world in data rates allowed on the bands. What does this mean to us? Certainly it will green light data transfer modes (Pactor and VARA for Winlink for instance) but also will open the door for all manner of digital modes which have been limited by slow data rates limiting use and development of new modes. Several attempts have been made to establish HF data-based modes, JS8 and VARAC come to mind, with limited success. Perhaps this is the kick these modes need to jump into the mainstream. Who knows?

As positive as this change is, it is also a harbinger that the use of our bands will continue to change. And change in ways that will undoubtedly be in conflict with our legacy modulation modes. It ain't an exclusive phone and code world anymore. We can only wait and see what develops.



Nut Net Breakfast

Will Not be held in December

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 Genesis Restaurant corner of HWY 100 and Beloit Road, Greenfield, WI. Looking forward to seeing you, mark your calendar.

Phil, W9NAW

Enjoy the Holiday Season. The next Nut Net Breakfast is schedule for January 23, 2024. In the meantime MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY HOLIDAYS.

2023 Challenge for our membership. Have someone you meet, Ham or Ham wannabe come to a meeting this year!

ELMER

by Rich Regent, K9GDF



Don't Look so Sad Tom Langer KD9FPC

This past week has been a series of one miserable solar report after another. Just out from Space Weather... "The geomagnetic field is expected to be at quiet to unsettled levels on day one (03 Dec), unsettled to major storm levels on day two (04 Dec) and quiet to minor storm levels on day three (05 Dec). Protons have a slight chance of crossing threshold on days one, two, and three (03 Dec, 04 Dec, 05 Dec)." So now a question. Did any of this keep you from operating? I hear reports that many just didn't bother to try.

I wish to take argument with the assumption that some bogie man named solar weather means don't bother to try. Just today I was given a report that an operator was able to work a POTA station in Spain. They told me it took them a while and there were lapses in time. But they got it. Question two. When one reports the frequencies are "dead" is that because they truly are or that so few choose to operate?

I was able to get restarted in 2015. The popular theory was that we "were in a low solar cycle". But then along came one very wise Elmer and he told me to pay no attention. Get a decent antenna up and go for it. Since that day I have worked "100 watts and a wire". OK, a vertical the past few years after the tree rats took down the wire. Looking back at my log I have entries for Italy, England, Sweden, all over the U.S., Canada, etc. No amp. No fancy equipment. Just me and my trusty K'wood 590SG.

What makes me smile is that the 2mm and 70cm's were also alive and well. Really enjoyed nets, made many good friends locally and found out that it is people that make ham radio the great hobby it is for everyone.

Now, here we are in 2023 about to replace the calendar and supposedly somewhere around the top of the solar cycle. Yet we are still told of trouble on the air. The doom and gloom team is telling us not to bother unless we have a 200 foot tower and legal limit amp all on the top of some amazing mountain.

May I please propose that we all get over the solar nightmare and just get on the air? Would bet that we'll suddenly find that there are others out in the ether. And if you tire of HF, or just simply like 2 meters, get out there on the many fine repeaters we are blessed with here in the area. Join your local clubs and get active. Or, as an old boss liked to say, let's all be part of the solution, not the pollution. _._. __. and 73.

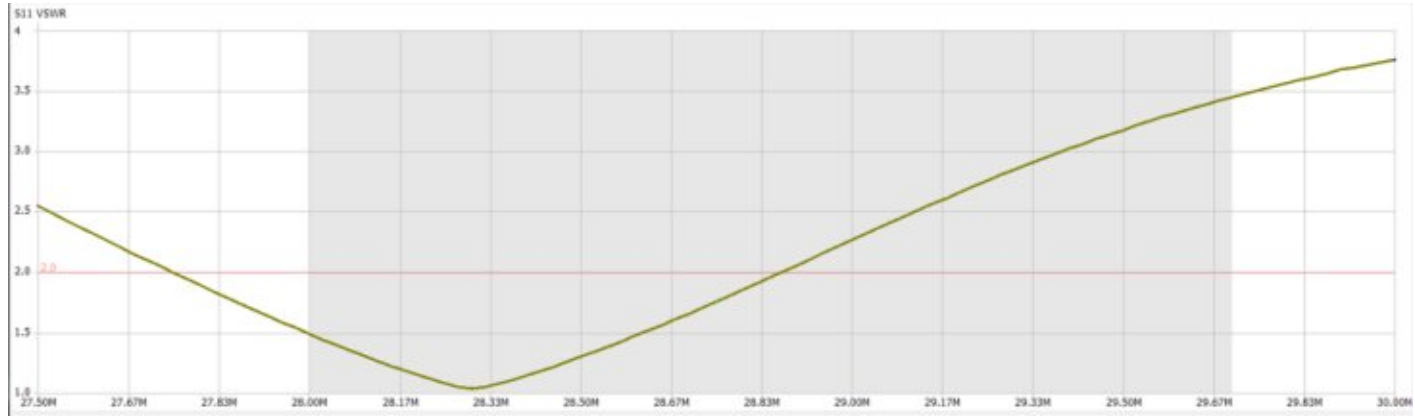
It's Back! The ARRL 10 Meter Contest Michael Johnson, WO9B Dec 2023

If you're reading this on Friday morning, Dec 8th, get ready, the contest begins in just a few short hours running from Dec 9, 0000Z thru Dec 10th 2400Z. Doing the math, that translates to Friday night at 6:00 PM until Sunday at 6:00 PM. You can look up the rules [HERE](#), but the gist is CW and Phone, talk to everybody everywhere. It's a December tradition and easy to operate. What's more, IT'S 10 METERS!!!

For years, WARAC ran a club competition using this contest as a backdrop. With the sunspot cycle waning to zero, participation dropped to darn near zero too. After all, how much fun is it to listen to hours of static with the hope of cashing in on brief Sporadic-E openings. Back in 2022 I may have made 25 QSO's despite a determined effort. That's a tough sell. But times have changed, or rather the sunspots have. 10 Meters is a hot band these days. How hot? A typical day delivers EU & AF in the morning, SA in the afternoon and AS/OC to close out the day. Just wow.

I've got a soft spot for this contest. It was the first event I participated in when I relit my ham radio hobby back in 2015. I usually try to set up a special antenna just for that weekend. 10 meter antennas tend to be small and surprisingly easy to make. So this year, to celebrate triple digit sunspot numbers, it was time to do the antenna special once more. With the encouragement of Ron, N9AU, this year's 10 meter special was picked to be a loop, which is now hanging from a suitable limb in my backyard.

Ron shared a 2004 QST article "[A 10/17 Meter Hanging Loop Antenna](#)" which detailed the construction for a simple loop antenna offering gain and directivity over a dipole. My past antennas consisted typically of verticals, both ground mounted and elevated, so this seemed right on track. I modified the article's design to be just a single loop for 10 meters. It is roughly 6' wide x 12' long and is swinging from a tree limb up 30' or so. Construction was literally an hour or two using on-hand materials. Ron suggested that a choke should be included at the antenna feedpoint. Tuning the antenna was a snap and I've been having great success making DX contacts on CW, SSB and FT8 all week. It is off to the ARRL 10 Meter Contest for me.



From the Editor

Two projects this month: During HRO's Black Friday sale I bought an SDRplay radio. I haven't found time to play with it other than a short test. There are so many software buttons to learn! Should keep me busy.

The other project is finding a way to get visual positioning of the screwdriver antenna we use on QSO parties. It can be done just by listening to the signal. We're hoping this will make it faster to find the low SWR points (especially on the lower frequencies where the low point is very sharp).

If I had bought a new screwdriver antenna it would not be much of a problem. They come with a way to count the the number of turns so you can set it up connected to an automatic tuner for a fee. HI HI. The old one I have doesn't have that.

It came to my attention that there is a thing called a String potentiometer which is a pot with a string attached to the shaft turning the pot as the string is pulled out. It was new to me, but not so new to others I mentioned it to!

So it's something new to experiment with. I have some ideas how it will be used. If I get it working maybe I'll bring it in for a demonstration at a meeting.

That's all for now & I wish everyone enjoyable holidays!

73

Frank

Swapp 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

Blonde QRM

A Story

BY HARRY OTIS BRUNN, JR.,* WSMXT

IT WAS one of those cold nights last December when I took a stroll over to the Kerfew Apartments to see my friend Isadore Shapiro, locally known as "the greatest splash on 160." Climbing the squeaky stairway, I arrived at a door with 2B on it and knocked. Not hearing a reply, I walked in and found Isadore in his shack, tearing his hair over a messy diagram of a power supply.

"Hi, Izzy," I said, hanging my hat on his rack-and-panel job. "Say, fellah, you shoulda seen the glamorous blonde I just saw coming up the apartment steps. Glamour? Oomph? Wow, I'll say!"

Isadore didn't even say hello to me; he just grabbed out a few more fistfuls of hair and mumbled something under his breath about filter condensers.

"Now what the heck's causing all your mental QRM, old timer?" I asked. "You look as though you lost your last r.f. choke or something. I should think you'd be anxious to hear about a blonde with oomph and stuff."



Isadore rubbed his sunken eyes and let out a long moan. With a trembling finger he pointed to the far corner of the room. There was something there I hadn't noticed before. It looked like a final amplifier with a couple of gigantic tubes.

"Well, fer the luvva Pete!" I exclaimed. "Where in the name of Old Betsy did you ever get those things?"

"Won 'em in a c.w. contest," he groaned. "They're SQH-750's. You can run a kw. to a pair of 'em." Then he pulled a junky looking power pack out from under the operating table. Resting his foot on it, he said, "The only power supply I got in the whole joint — exactly 412 volts! Oh, how I wish I wuz dead!"

Poor Isadore! I could see how he felt. Here he

*Egbertsville, N. Y.

got a beautiful pair of r.f. bottles for nothing, and all he had to push them with was 412 volts. And Izzy was a clerk in a "5 and 10"; he really didn't have much excess lucre to spend on ham junk.

"Tell you wot we'll do," I said. "We'll get all the transformers we can lay our hands on and put 'em in series to get about 5000 volts. Then we'll use that old dilapidated pair of 866's I got in my junk box, and your pair, and we'll have a bridge rectifier. Why, we'll have your pair of peach jars percolatin' in no time!"

He looked a little relieved, but not much. "Yeh," he said, "but how about the filter?"

Then I showed him how he could buy a whole pile of paper electrolytics for about three bucks and put them in series, and he was happy.

"Heaven only knows what it'll sound like," he said, "but at least it'll be a kw. You don't know how I've suffered! Imagine having a couple of 500-watt fruit bottles on the pantry shelf and nothing to stuff 'em with. Tsk!"

I laid my hand on his shoulder and said, "Take it easy, old man. I'm not saying you'll have a p.d.c. carrier, but you'll have a kw. and the R.I. doesn't sit up until 3 A.M. anyway!"

Isadore glanced up on the wall where he had a couple of green tickets all dolled up in a gilded picture frame.

"One more of those and I can complete my collection," he said. "Then I'm going after the pink ones they give you for operating out of the band."

So then we threw his twelve watts on the air and chewed the fat with a couple of local boys until about half past one. After that, I went home to bed and dreamed about the glamorous blonde I met on the steps of the Kerfew Apartments.

* * * * *

About a week later Isadore had his kilowatt on the air down on twenty meters in the c.w. band. But then the lady in apartment 3A began to complain about her kitchen lights blinking on and off, and he decided to put the pile of junk on 160 and grid-modulate it. He used his twenty-meter Zepp as a Marconi, and tapped onto the cold-water pipe in his bathroom for a ground. This seemed to work pretty well until one Sunday afternoon when Grampa Schmaltz from apartment 5A came stamping into Isadore's shack with his bathrobe on, dripping wet. It seems Grampa was taking a bath, and when he reached to turn off the cold water an eighteen-inch spark bounced off his index finger and hit him smack in the nose.

From the Presidents Shack

Every December I sit back and take stock of my year and ponder upon the significant things that happened to me in the past year. As I have aged I have come to the realization that the biggest gift I can give to another is not anything material. It is the gift of time – something that is precious and is very limited in its supply. So, next year I resolve to share my time with more people than I did this year.

When it comes to Ham Radio, let us think about giving some time to the Amateur Service and everything it offers to us. We have many of our members who give of their time to make sure our Club lives on. For that I am grateful. Sometimes we tend to take that for granted. But should we? Hmmm.....(pondering)

We do need help in keeping the wheels of our club greased and moving in the right direction. The task appears to be uphill and daunting. However, it becomes so only when the burden is carried by a few. As they say, many hands make light work and we do need many hands.

We have a whole bunch of activities that you can participate in or be a part of. From the Wisconsin QSO Party, to our fund raisers, to Field Day, to sharing things you do in Ham Radio with your fellow members at a monthly meeting, to becoming a mentor to the newer hams and members of our club, to our Trunk-2-Trunk Mini swap event and the ... and the list goes on. We will need a lot of help from many if the idea of making the Ham Radio Symposium a reality gathers traction and moves forward.

On a slightly different note I was impressed and touched by all of the members who reached out and offered many kind words of encouragement to our new young ham who attended the meeting last month (His name eludes me at the moment – Sorry!). Way to go WARAC! Kudos to you. This is what it is all about.

OM Dave Garnier has been seen playing with a new toy. It is a Spectrum Analyzer. He will be sharing his thoughts and also present a short Demo on how it works at the monthly meeting in December.

Don't forget we do not have a meeting in January of 2024. Instead we have our holiday party I would venture to say. Join your fellow members for a non-meeting meeting! Of course, YL's are welcome.

Merry Christmas Everybody from our house to yours. May your season be filled with love and family. Take time to enjoy those precious and fleeting moments with family.

73,

Feroz (and XYL Pam)

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