



Official Publication of the  
West Allis Radio Amateur Club

# Hamtrix

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Volume 74, Issue 8 August, 2025

## AUGUST CLUB HAPPENINGS



NUT NET  
3.985mhz  
Monday-Saturday  
8:15am CT

WARAC 4th Tuesday  
Breakfast  
At the Forum  
Layton & Hyw 100 at  
8:30am

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

**August Monthly Meeting**  
**Pizza in the Park**  
Tuesday Aug 12th  
6:00 PM to 8:00 PM

- ☒ Pizza
- ☒ Soda
- ☒ Radio's
- ☐ Fox Hunt
- ☐ YOU!!!

**Lions Park**  
Picnic Shelter #2  
14900 W Overland Trail  
New Berlin, WI

**More picnic info page 11**

Sendik's Grill fundraiser  
September 6, 2025  
11:00 to 4:00 pm  
At the New Berlin store

**Sign up at the picnic send me a-mail**  
**[fhump@milwpc.com](mailto:fhump@milwpc.com)**

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## WARAC 4th Tuesday Breakfast

### NOTE NEW LOCATION

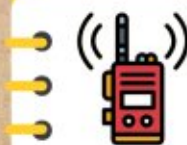
Several years ago there was talk among Nut Net members that we should get to meet each other. A breakfast get together idea was started. It was open to all hams, XYL/partners and anyone who wanted to learn about amateur radio. Even visiting OM/XYL couples joined us.

So, on the fourth Tuesday each month at 8:30 am we meet at [The Forum Restaurant](#), corner of HWY 100 and Layton, Greenfield, WI. Looking forward to seeing you, mark your calendar.

Phil, W9NAW

## WARAC Find Us On The Air

### VHF Simplex 146.55 Mhz & AllStar #63584



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 / Allstar 63584. 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.

# Pizza for you...and you...and YOU!!

The August **Pizza in the Park** meeting is one of my favorites. Everything just goes better with a slice of pizza. Hopefully the weather will cooperate, but even if it is



somewhat dicey, the wonderful park shelter will come to the rescue. Aside from the pizza perk, for me not having to plan a program is a welcome break. That's a treat for you all as well, not having to listen to me drone on. As is our custom, the event starts earlier than normal: 6:00 PM. We will have a cooler or two of beverages to choose from as well.

Though jabbering amongst ourselves is the real payday, Team Falk (AA9RK & KD9NZB) will be hosting a Fox Hunt on site. Check out their writeup for some supplemental

info. I was recommending that Frank, KA9FZR be relegated to the "professional" category, but that idea was rejected. Wisely so no doubt. We will also have an AllStar Link Node setup for you to experiment with and maybe a DMR node. Just a little something to do between slices of pepperoni or sausage.

Of importance for next month's meeting, we are scheduled to move into our new home at the Hickory Grove Community Center. There is more than a little bit of construction work to complete for that to happen, so the potential for adventure surrounding the September Meeting is high. We will keep our ears to the rail and attempt to issue timely instructions. The new facility is located just east of our past (current?) meeting place on the corner of Cleveland and Sunnyslope. By all measures this looks to be a first class facility and I am very excited to set up shop there. Fingers crossed that it all comes together as planned.

See you all at the Park on Tuesday!!

## **WARAC General Meeting Minutes - July 8, 2025**

Called to order by Mike Johnson WO9B @ 7 pm.

Attendance: 24 Member's.

June General Meeting Minutes - Approved.

On line Board Meeting July 22 @ 7pm.

Meeting place update: MJ - Starting in September. Hickory Grove @ South Sunny Slope Rd. & West Cleveland Av.

August 12th - Lions park. Pizza in the park. 6pm.

WIQP - Mike WO9B: WIQP is a wrap. Certificates, Plaques have been delivered. Mike read a Thank you letter from Jim Smith KK0U. He won the WIQP (highest out of state QRP score).

### **Field Day Wrap up:**

Gary KO9VGL. Played a 3 minute video he made at Field Day.

Dave WB90WN: The weather was great. Point total last year was 2064. This year 2340. Mike Falk suggested swapping the coax between the 40m and 20m radios. CW on 40m, FT-8 on 20m. Roger AC9BT had a radio with him in his truck, and did 32 qso's on 40m phone. Mike WO9B worked Field day in the UP.

South Milwaukee Swap fest shut down early because of the heat.

13 Colonies was last week. Al, Gil worked it.

MJ - Publication of the month. Zero Retries by Steve Stroh N8GNJ. Focus on digital vhf/uhf networks.

### **Presentation by Scott Sherer KC9WPS - How to spend way to much money, time and brainpower on My Ham Station.**

Scott talked about his multi year journey of building his ham station. From his station design goals and building his custom wood desk with a 19" rack system on casters. And building a custom station control using a raspberry Pi with 2 relay hats setup with a Gtk GUI using python. His design goals. Movable, dust control. Pressurized, filtered, temperature controlled cabinet. Must only use 1 keyboard and 1 mouse and 2 speakers, for the whole station. Radios - 2 uhf, 1 vhf/uhf, 1 air band. Power supply and surge protection. Scott put fuses between the power supply and all devices it supply's. Scott is willing to share his python code, if anyone wants to copy his control idea.

Meeting Adjourned at 8:22 pm.

Respectfully Submitted

Bill Dargis KD9BJZ

Secretary WARAC, July 8, 2025

## WARAC Board Meeting Minutes - July 22, 2025

Board meeting called to order by Pierre Porter KD9SSY @ 7:05PM.

Present: Pierre Porter KD9SSY, Bill Reed N9KPH, Bill Dargis KD9BJZ, Jeff Pahl W9JSP, Feroz Ghouse WU9N, Tom Macon K9BTQ.

**Treasurers report** Bill Reed – WIQSO Party club net cost for plaques and shipping was \$144. The Schwab account is doing well. Up \$332 from our initial investment. Field day costs are currently within it budget. The general fund CD is earning ~ 4%, the checking account is earning very little amount.

Next Sendik's Grill Event is September 6<sup>th</sup>.

Publicity – Pierre put up fliers for the May Sendik's event, plans to do something for the September's Sendik's event.

**Symposium** – Feroz: Handing off the logistics to Mike. Capital Data has pledged \$500, Simon's Electric \$200, Chainlink Technologies will pick up the balance. This should be enough funds to cover the hall (RTC center), a coffee pot and some donuts. A Poster or Banner recognizing our sponsors. If registration fee is \$10 and we get 100 people. That would get the club \$1,000. We could use the profits to seed the fund for 2027's Symposium. We could talk to MRAC about a possible VE testing session. We may need to pay our speakers. The need to advertise. Fliers, contact Ham Clubs in Wisconsin, Illinois, etc. Go on the local nets and pass the word.

Website: No update. Mike is still working on it.

Meeting place status: We have a permit to use the Hickory Grove location thru April 2026. Club needs to inquire, what is needed to continue at the Hickory Grove site or look for a new location.

Directory Completed for 2025.

FTP site replacement: Pierre will look at Google Drive. Jeff said he could help. Question on preserving original file dates.

**Elections - October:** People willing to stay another year. Mike, Pierre, Bill D. Bill D. Would like 2026 to be last year serving. Stepping down, Bill Reed. Membership, people can run for positions.

**August** – Lion's park. Pizza in the Park 6PM. MJ to bring Pizza. Need beverages, deserts, - volunteers. AA9RK to do a Foxhunt. People should bring radio's, bug repellent.

**September** - EMCOM program depending on Jim Burn's schedule.

Feroz Fund rising idea. A Meat raffle. The Mississippi Valley Amateur Radio Club on the

West side of the state does a \$1,000 Meat raffle, 1-2 a year and make \$6-7k.

Meeting Adjourned at 8:15PM.

Respectfully Submitted

Bill Dargis KD9BJZ

WARAC Secretary, July 22, 2025

# Announcing our new meeting location!

Starting with our September 9th meeting we will be meeting at:

**The New Berlin Community Center at Hickory Grove**  
**2600 S. Sunny Slope Road**

(North East corner of Sunny Slope Rd and Cleveland Avenue)



# Contest Corner and DX Report

Michael Falk, AA9RK

Summer is going by too fast. I hope to see many of you at the August 12<sup>th</sup> meeting. **Max and I will run a foxhunt again.** The most important thing to bring is a 2 meter (and optionally 70 cm also) FM handheld radio with an S-meter, which makes finding a hidden transmitter much easier. If you have a small directional antenna, that helps too, but isn't strictly necessary! We'll also have some spares of everything, so everyone can join in the fun.

I've been on the air very little this summer. I've kept busy with a litany of other things!

**This weekend, August 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>,** there is the Maryland-DC QSO Party and Kentucky State Parks On The Air, if you are a fan of state events. The MDC party is 14 hours on Saturday, and the Kentucky event is just 8 hours long during the day.

**This Saturday (August 9)** there is also the 50 MHz Fall Sprint on Saturday night for four hours. Lots of the "big guns" on VHF+ will be on the air, so if there is any propagation enhancement at all, you should have stations to work. If you've been following this column, you know there is some controversy in the VHF+ world about how to handle the fact that most contest contacts have been moving to digital in recent years, to the point that many contests are de facto FT8 contests. (Also FT4 and Q65, but you get my point.) There are several competing ideas for how to handle this, and I think this Saturday's sprint has the right idea. You can work stations once per band on a digital mode AND once on an analog mode. This encourages every station to be active both on digital and on SSB/FM/CW, and I believe that if the goal is to encourage activity on ALL modes, this is the right way to incentivize it. (And you didn't ask, but my current opinion is that the best answer is to allow working a station 3 times per band; once on digital, once on CW, and once on phone.)

**I get worked up about this stuff.** Sorry. You wanted to know about upcoming contests, not how I think we need to fix ham radio. Next weekend, August 16/17, there are two ARRL VHF+ contests - the 10 GHz and Up contest and the EME contest. I don't have the gear for either of those, but I think recent innovations in the microwaves are worthwhile and cool, and moonbounce is just such an interesting idea. There is also the North American QSO Party (SSB edition) on Saturday, which is a 12-hour, easy, fun contest with a low barrier to entry. Stations are limited to 100 watts, so even the biggest guns are operating at low power. There is a QRP event, the NJQRP Skeeter Hunt, which is a very popular 4 hour long event encouraging homebrew rigs and portable operations (but it's okay if you use commercial gear from home!). CW is limited to 5 watts and SSB to 10 watts.

**Pay attention to the Walk for the Bacon QRP Contest,** running one hour each night on Wednesday and Thursday, August 20 and 21. The Walk (and Run) for the Bacon events are events sponsored by the Flying Pigs QRP Club. This has a maximum CW speed of 13 WPM and is on 20 meters only. If you want to get into CW contesting but the high speeds are a barrier, try this one out.

**On the weekend of August 23-24,** there are two US-based events and a spate - a

litany – a passel – of events centered outside of North America. You can operate in the Ohio QSO Party on Saturday and the and Hawaii QSO Party on both weekend days. (I think back to how hard I worked to get my first Hawaii station, which was the 50<sup>th</sup> I needed for Worked All States. If I'd waited for the QSO Party, it may have been easier!) On the band this weekend, you can also find the Romanian International YODX HF Contest (CW and SSB), the Turkey HF SSB Contest, the Amateur Radio Society of India VU DX Contest (CW and SSB), the Concurso Verde e Amarelo DX HF Contest (“Green and Yellow Contest”, sponsored from Brazil – SSB this weekend, CW on August 16 and 17), and the SARL HF CW Contest (from the South African Radio League, celebrating 100 years this year). I have enough antennas and power to reach precisely none of the DX events, but you might catch me on the Ohio and Hawaii events.

**On August 30 and 31**, Labor Day Weekend, you'll find the U.S. Islands QSO Party, Colorado QSO Party, and Kansas QSO Party, along with the MI QRP Labor Day CW Sprint. The World Wide Digi DX contest is also running on the FT modes for 24 hours on HF. Then on September 6 and 7, you'll find some CW events – the CWOps CW Open (a fun event, much like the NAQP but only 4 hours long, with three different 4 hour events on the same weekend). There is also the Wake-Up! QRP Sprint, various Field Day events from other parts of the world, Ohio State Parks on the Air, a PODXS 070 event on the PSK31 mode, and the Tennessee QSO Party.

### **Here are four Island DXpeditions you may be interested in**

**:T30TTT** is still on the air from Tarawa in Kiribati in the Pacific Ocean. They have several ops and operate mostly digital, but also some SSB and CW.

**KH9/K9HEI** is activating Wake Island from August 8 until 22, mostly on FT8 and SSB. You can't just visit Wake Island, since it's an Air Force base (and probably still has unexploded ordnance dating from World War II); he is allowed to be there for work.

**E51KEE** from Rarotonga in the South Cook Islands, northeast of New Zealand and near Tahiti is QRV through August 18<sup>th</sup>, QRV on 40-10 meters, analog modes.

**VK2/SP9FIH** will be on Lord Howe Island from August 27 to September 13. No, I didn't know either. It is an island preserve, 400 miles northeast of Sydney, Australia. It is easier to visit than, say, Wake Island, but it's out of the way and limits the number of visitors at any time. He has weight limitations on his bags, so he is operating mostly higher bands (30-10 meters), on SSB and on the multi-stream FT8 variants. (MSHV, Fox and Hound mode, and such.)

See you next month,  
-Michael AA9RK



August 2025

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Hamtrix

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By Michael Johnson, WO9B

## Digital Happenings

It is time to catch up on some significant events taking place in the digital realm of our favorite hobby. As is not uncommon, there are lots of fun / not so fun developments to take note of. So let's get started....in no particular order:

**VARAC Version 12:** [VARAC](#) version 12 was released approximately one month ago. As a refresher, VARAC is a digital chat mode that uses the whip fast, weak signal VARA Modem software as its basis. VARA, of course, is the latest digital variant most popular for WinLink data transfers. VARAC brings the power of VARA to digital chat on HF, VHF, UHF bands. Mostly it is of interest in the HF bands with 20 meters being popular during the day. VARAC has been under active development for several years and has gradually been gaining useful capabilities that make it "of interest" to digital hams. **Version 12 is a game changer** in that it finally delivers internet email gateway capability, a trick previously dominated by WinLink.

So what happens is any station can now denote themselves as an email gateway which you can connect to and use as a relay station to deliver internet email. The recipients do not need to be hams and they can also reply to your email by simply doing a familiar internet email reply. In theory, this will then come back via VARAC connection to the original sender. This is pretty much how WinLink works, except VARAC is totally outside of WinLink.

I couldn't resist and had to dig in and give it a try. Eh....it's pretty rough at this point. I have not had a successful send and reply experience yet. To be fair, the system is reliant on the email gateway station, which if they don't forward the email to the internet, well it is the old dead letter cache. Hmmm. Not much you can do with that. Also, a VARAC reply has the same problem coming back at you. It is less than reliable at this point.

Check it out. Try it out. Your experience may be very different. I am hoping VARAC finds a way to formalize and perhaps semiautomate the gateway stations. That seems to me to be the next step.

**M17 Fork:** This is misleading on my part. [M17](#) the ONLY digital voice open source mode, has hit a snag. Frankly, these types of development projects live by snags, but in this case there has been a bit of a blow up between M17 and [WPSD](#) the heir apparent to the Pi-Star MMDVM ubiquitous hotspot software. If you've got a hotspot, then somewhere under the hood it is running Pi-Star, which in turn has been replaced with WPSD. It's a little confusing, but for the most part Pi-Star development has virtually stopped ergo ceding hotspot dominance to WPSD. Got that? Not sure I do, but what's important is that WPSD has cutoff M17 from its software. As they say, "The Girls are Fighting!!"

The effect of this removal means that the M17 project has lost its seat at the hotspot table. It is not a good prospect for M17. But fear not, as the open source world has almost immediately responded with a fork to the WPSD packages with a WPSD M17 package. So there. I'm sure this will all go smoothly from this point forward. Or not.

M17 is an important project as it is attempting to develop an open source amateur radio voice protocol free of proprietary codecs and therefore IP entanglements. It is a worthy goal, but one fraught with difficulties, both technical and structural. Being banned from the hotspot universe is not helpful. Time will tell where this goes from here.

**The Random Wire Publication:** At the last meeting I mentioned the Zero Retries weekly email publication. I received a few positive comments following the meeting which has encouraged me to make another recommendation. <https://www.randomwire.us/> is a similar weekly email publication published by Tom Salzer, KJ7T. It too is free, but he does request donation/subscription if you feel value is being received. The Random Wire's focus is on VHF/UHF digital systems, though not completely so.

I've been signed up since the beginning of the year. I was initially drawn to it because of Tom's interest in the AllStar Link protocol. At the time I was looking for authoritative directions for AllStar, but as it turns out, Tom is also on the AllStar journey. I find his issues and writing to be easily accessible, relatable and therefore very comforting. I look forward to every new edition in my Friday inbox. Give it a try.

**Code Plug ReWriting:** The bane of DMR radios, frankly any new radio these days, is the code plug. The very idea that a code plug can ever be finished is completely absurd. I actually believe I suffer from Code Plug PTSD. I get a slight headache just entertaining the idea of revising my code plug.

Well, like it or not, this past week I've had an epiphany regarding my code plug. As my use of digital voice networks has evolved over the past few years, I am finding I bounce from digital network to digital network. My existing codeplug is organized by hotspot digital network zones which encapsulate that network's talk groups. It dawned on me that this is a ridiculous grouping as the hotspot monitors several networks concurrently. If I want to respond or better yet originate a call to one of those networks, it is very inconvenient to switch zones and then try to find the wanted talk group. The new idea is to create a hotspot zone which contains the talk groups I'm interested in regardless of network. That way I'm just clicking the rotary knob on my Anytone to select the talk group I want. I'm pretty sure I'm the last dog to the bowl with this idea.

I am only on the cusp of this project. I've got another bigger project in the works (my SB-200 rejuvenation) which takes precedence. I also toasted my main HF radio and am in the middle of a repair / replacement scheme. I'm excited about a new radio, but not so much about the work of bringing it into the shack's software world. I'll get on the code plug project soon enough.

Pizza in the Park has become an annual tradition. The club will be providing the pies and beverages. Plenty of room to setup a radio if you wish. Don't be late, but plan on staying late!!

**NOTE: 6:00pm start time!**

## Editor

This June is one of the few Junes which had a fourth weekend and then a last weekend too on separate weekends! So I was able to get out and see some of the set up and operation in the field.

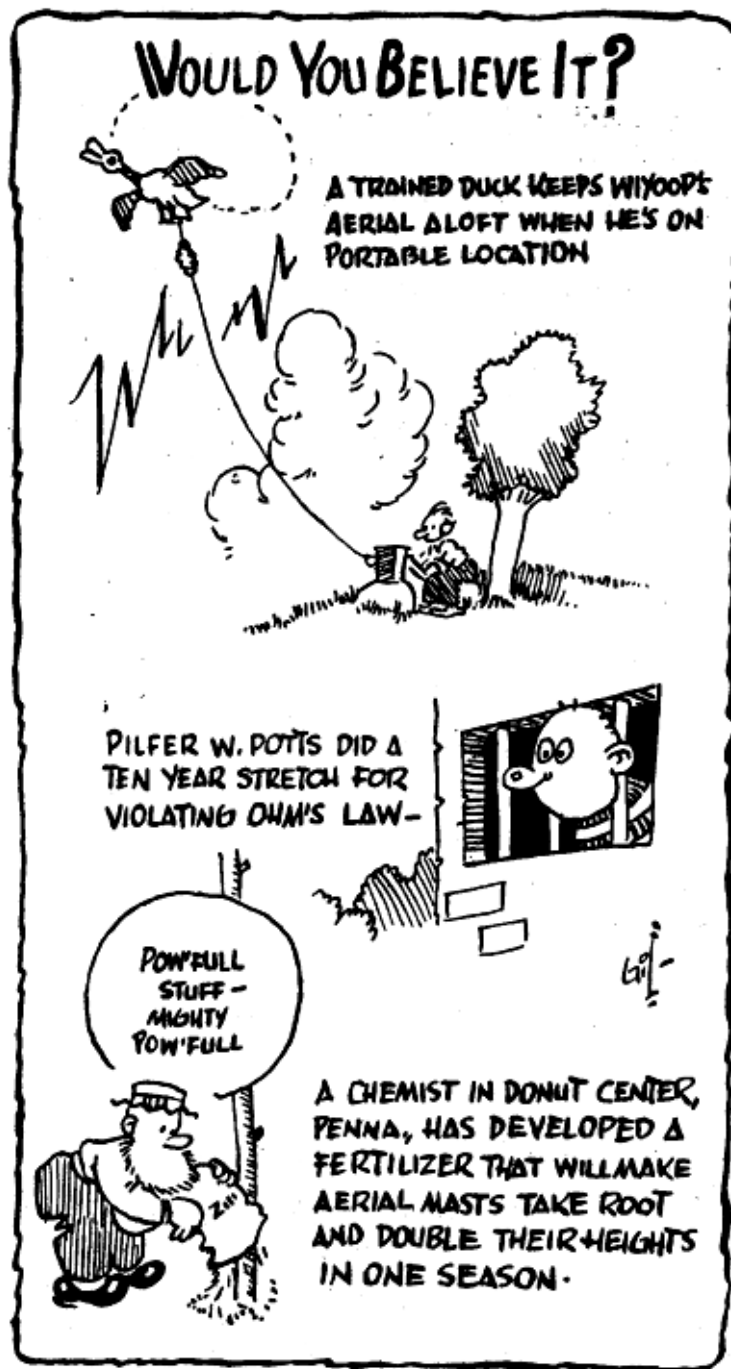
I had a fun time, didn't operate much because I brought Lucky, my Greyhound along. Judy was busy away from home so he came along.

I had a fun time and got to meet some of the Hams I talk to on the nut net which is always fun.

One ham project I'm working on is fixing my screwdriver mobile antenna. So far the rebuild has been interesting. Taking it apart so I can check parts has taken more time than I want to admit. Did learn how to take it apart without doing any damage. I found the fingerstock that shorts the coil to the lower pipe was worn out. The original order of replacement stock may work but would need a spacer. So I ordered the next size up so see if it will work. So far it has been an interesting project. Will keep you informed .

Hope to see you at the meeting

Frank



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

DON'T KEY LIKE A PHONE MAN



## SLOW SPEED CW QSO NET

*Monday's - 8:00 PM - 146.55 Simplex and AllStar Node #63584*

### 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:

Mike Johnson WO9B

Vice-President

Pierre Porter KD9SSY

Treasure:

Bill Reed N9KPH

Secretary:

Bill Dargis KD9BJZ

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