



Official Publication of the  
West Allis Radio Amateur Club

# Hamtrix

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Volume 62, Issue 4 April, 2015

## APRIL CLUB HAPPENINGS

### Club Meeting

St. Peter's Episcopal Church,  
7929 W. Lincoln Avenue, West Allis  
April 14, 2015 **7:00pm**

### Program

High Altitude Ballooning,  
presented by Joe Schwarz, N9UX

[Join us for a pre-meeting dinner  
at Johnny V's Classic Cafe  
1650 S 84th St at 5:00pm](#)



### NUT NET

3.985mhz  
Monday-Saturday  
8:15am CT

### Milwaukee-Florida Net

Every Day on 14.290 Mhz  
7:00AM - 9:15AM ET  
6:00AM - 8:15AM CT

### Field Day Planning Meeting

St. Mary's Parish, Hales Corners  
Tuesday April 21, 7 pm  
9520 W. Forest Home Ave  
see page 5 for more details

### WARAC 2-meter net

Every Wednesday at 8pm  
MATC repeater 147.045 standard offset  
127.3 Hz CTCSS



Club jackets and hats!  
Go to club Web site and click on  
The GOLD MEDAL IDEAS block  
[For more info or click here](#)



# The President's Shack March 2014

It's time for our Field Day planning meeting - a sure sign of Spring!

It's scheduled for Tuesday, April 21, just a week after the upcoming club meeting. Here's your chance to be involved in planning one of our biggest and most fun activities of the year. Be there! As in recent years, the meeting will be held at St Mary School, 9520 W. Forest Home Ave in Hales Corners. Look for a separate announcement in this issue of Hamtrix. And thanks to Chairman Chuck, W9WLX, for organizing this event again for 2015.

And, speaking of Fun, our 2nd annual Pizza Meeting is coming up on May 12, starting at 6:30. Besides pizza, the main attraction will be an Auction. Start gathering your valuable items to donate or sell. Proceeds to our David Knaus Memorial Scholarship fund. More information at the meeting and in next month's Hamtrix.



Joe Schwarz N9UX

The program for this month's meeting is High Altitude Ballooning, to be presented by Joe Schwarz, N9UX. Joe is part of the Wisconsin HAB project, which is planning its second balloon launch later this month. High Altitude Ballooning involves launching a weather balloon with a payload of various video and communications equipment. The planned payload for the upcoming launch is planned to include a video camera shooting 1080p 60 fps video, an action camera shooting 5 megapixel time-lapse images

every 10 seconds, plus APRS on 144.390 MHz. Sounds like cool stuff! Come to the meeting and get the whole story from Joe.

The 2015 edition of the Wisconsin QSO Party took place on March 15 and, by all indications, things went well. Fortunately, the solar events that messed up propagation for about a week happened after WIQP, so conditions were fairly good on the day of the contest. There seemed to be plenty of activity and preliminary indications are that scores are quite high, especially for the mobiles. More info at the meeting.

Thanks to Mike, WO9B, and Bill, N9KPH, our W9FK was activated in the QSO party. Mike and Bill collaborated for 427 Q's, about half on CW, netting them over 87000 points! Thanks, guys, for your efforts and for getting W9FK on the air.

Personally, I operated as K9BTP/mobile, covering eight counties in northeastern Wisconsin, with Bill doing the driving. We did 158 Q's, mostly on phone. Never having done mobile before, it was a great experience in spite of some cockpit problems. We hope to solve the problems and be back for another go next year.

The Radio Merit Badge project for Boy Scout Troop 580 at Mt Hope Lutheran has been completed with most of the boys earning the merit badge. The people at Troop 580 were great to work with and a big thanks to Erwin, WI9EV, Frank, KA9FZR and Mike, WO9B for doing this. We anticipate that there will be additional Radio Merit Badge opportunities with other Scouting groups.

Don't forget our before-meeting dinner at Johnny V's Classic Café, 1650 S. 84th St. at 5:00PM. Joe, N9UX is planning to join us.

See you at the meeting! Bring a friend!  
Tom, K9BTQ

## From the Editor

Had a fun month. Erwin WI9EV, Mike WO9B and me spent time teaching a troop of Boy Scouts their radio merit badge. It consisted of 3 hour sections of lecture and question and answer plus one section where the scouts got to talk on the radio.

*continued pg 12*

# **WARAC General Meeting Minutes**

**March 10, 2015**

## **Introduction**

The meeting was called to order at 7:04 pm by President, Tom Macon, K9BTQ. Overall meeting attendance was 19 with 1 visitor.

## **Program**

The evening's program topics included:

Wisconsin QSO Party, Chuck Dellis, W9WLX & Tom Macon, K9BTQ

Overview of DX Cluster and Reverse Beacon Network, Mike Johnson, WO9B

Arduino, Debounce Sketch Presentation, Howard Smith, WA9AXQ

## **Business**

Motion was made and accepted to approve the February meeting minutes as published in Hamtrix.

Frank Humpal, KA9FZR, gave a Boy Scout Radio Merit Badge update. 2 of 3 modules have been completed for approximately 40 scouts and they are responding well. Operators are needed for the March 31st session to assist with the scouts making a QSO.

The Wednesday evening 2 meter net is has been well attended; some non-members have been checking in.

Steve Dryja NO9B, delivered the Arduino hardware that was ordered at the February meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:47 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Chuck Dellis, W9WLX

# **WARAC Board Meeting**

**March 24, 2015**

Howard Smith, WA9AXQ, called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

Present: Tom Macon, K9BTQ, Steve Dryja, NO9B, Howard Smith, WA9AXQ, Erwin von der Ehe, WI9EV, Al Hovey, WA9BZW and Mike Johnson, WO9B.

## **Radio Merit Badge**

Erwin, WI9EV brought the board up to date. Modules have been presented. Last session is next Tuesday, 3/31 @ 7:00 PM. We need 4 Hams with HT's to conduct the QSO portion. MJ will send out the directions to Tom, Howard, Al and Steve.

## **WI QSO Party**

Tom, K9BTQ updated on the WIQP activity. Has received 220+ logs so far. Waiting to receive more.

## **2015 Budget**

Howard suggests deferring the Budget process until August which will then put it on the cycle for finalizing the upcoming year in October.

## **Programs**

April –High Altitude Balloons, Arduino  
May – Pizza Night, Auction Evening  
June – Field Day, Chuck W9WLX  
July – Digital Modes – W9XT  
Aug – Club Potpourri  
Sept - Milwaukee Astronomical Society

## **Future Program Ideas**

Logbook of the World  
Spotting – W9XT  
FM38 Operations  
DSP presentation  
Yaesu Fusion System  
Kreg Jig Fastener System

## **Club Operations Manual**

No updates this month.

## **2012 , 2013 and 2014 Audit**

2012 is ready; 2013 is nearly done. Howard will prepare a package to be sent to Bill, N9KPH. Tom will determine another volunteer.

## **Awards Dinner**

Erwin, Frank and Paul are the Dinner Committee members. Erwin will get the group planning function started.

## **Other Items**

2 meter net has been well attended.

ID Badges: Two new members need to get badges. MJ to take care of in time for the next meeting

Printers: Howard has a spare printer he can donate to the club. Howard will have Frank take a look and see if it will work out

Meeting was adjourned 8:46 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Mike Johnson, WO9B  
Secretary WARAC

## **Field Day Planning Meeting--Save the Date!**

2015 Field Day planning meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, April 21. At this time, last year's New Berlin Field Day site is our first choice, but remains tentative pending a permit from the City of New Berlin. The location of the planning meeting is:

St. Mary's Parish, Hales Corners  
Tuesday April 21, 7 pm  
9520 W. Forest Home Ave

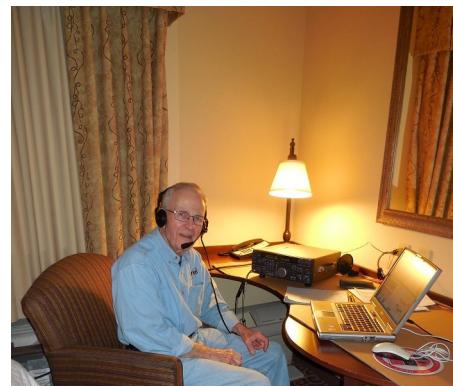
We will meet in the "Parish Office Lunch Room". Everyone should enter through the doors between the two buildings, go a little to the left and enter the parish office. Once there, tell the greeter that you are attending a meeting in the lunch room. You should be told to proceed to the back area.

Hope to see you there and get your thoughts on Field Day 2015!





## Pictures of Phil's W9NAW portable operation for the QSO party



***After providing reliable communications for most of this century commercial Morse code was officially laid to rest in North America in 1999. The final messages were sent from the Globe Wireless master station south of San Francisco. Read what it was like to be there on that final, emotional day.***

## **The End of Morse - The day the keys in North America fell silent by Richard Dillman**

The end came yesterday. We knew it had to come. But the end had been predicted so many times for so many years while Morse soldiered on, paying no attention, providing good, reliable service for decades after it was declared dead... maybe some of us thought the day would never come. But when KPH/KFS signed off the air for the last time yesterday it was the end of commercial Morse in North America.

It was a sad day but one I knew I couldn't miss.

Tom Horsfall and I were invited along with many others to be present at the Half Moon Bay master station of Globe Wireless from which the final messages would be sent. I held in my hand two messages I hoped to have transmitted. They were messages of greeting and farewell from the Maritime Radio Historical Society and the San Francisco Maritime Historical Park - typed of course with a mill on historically correct Mackay Radio radiogram blanks. I secretly dared hope that I myself might be permitted to send these messages. I brought along my favorite straight key in its carrying case and my radiotelegraph license just in case.

I have visited KFS many times over the years. On my first visit the operating room had nothing but Morse positions. Over the years the number of computers steadily advanced as the Morse positions retreated to the west end of the building. When we walked in yesterday both sides of the operating room were lined with racks holding sleek black computers and monitors. And way down at the end was the one remaining Morse operating position.

Tom spotted him first... Paul Zell, the Morse operator on duty. We knew him by his green eyeshade. All real radiotelegraph operators seem to wear green eyeshades. Pictures I have taken at KFS and KPH decades ago show men in green eyeshades at the key or the Kleinschmidt. Pictures taken at those stations decades before show the same thing. I am convinced there is a secret ceremony of the green eyeshade in which the distinctive headgear is carefully placed upon the head of the operator newly welcomed into the fraternity. This is of course a ceremony we have not been permitted to witness, a ceremony that will never again take place.

I sat down next to Paul Zell as we listened to Russian and Cuban ships calling their respective coast stations. I realized that true to its nature, Morse will carry on in other parts of the world even

after the keys in North America are finally silent. I had to ask Paul the question... "How are you feeling about today?" An impossible question to answer but he answered it. "CW was my life," he said and turned back to the receiver.

More people started to arrive, a surprising number of reporters among them. But the real dignitaries in my eyes were the radio men and women who knew they had to be here on this day. Jack Martini, manager of KPH when it shut down (he intentionally left the receivers on when he left). Ray Smith, the operator who sent the farewell message when KPH at Bolinas/Pt. Reyes shut down. John Brundage, manager of KFS in its golden age of Morse. Denise Stoops, the first female operator at KPH. Rex Patterson, chief engineer at KFS in its glory years. And many more. We swapped stories and I showed them my photo album. We ate from the delicious spread of food provided by Peter Kierans of Globe Wireless. But our eyes kept glancing at the clock. It was now less than two hours to the end.

I finally screwed my courage to the sticking place and asked Tim Gorman, Director of Operations, if my messages might be sent and if, perhaps, I might be permitted to send them. Tim had met me only that day. I might be a fumble-fisted lid for all he knew. And he was busy with the press and with all the details of the ceremony. "We'll see...", he said. And that was enough for me.

Now the final transmissions from WCC/WNU began. We copied them off the air. The room fell silent. I noticed one man in particular. He was probably the oldest person there but had a presence that we used to call "spry". He had a quick laugh and twinkling eye. I watched him now. He stood leaning forward, eyes closed, as the sound washed over him.... drinking in... the Morse. He was a pioneer operator, the genuine article, no doubt about it. I wanted to meet him, to ask his name at least. But of course I couldn't possibly interrupt his reverie.

Paul Zell sent the first of the KFS/KPH sign off messages from the local position. Again we were all silent and when he finished... there was a round of applause! Applause for a radiotelegraph operator! Well deserved applause, deserved by every radiotelegraph operator everywhere, applause unheard for 80 years. Paul made a small, embarrassed nod of his head, accepting the tribute for himself and for all the operators on all the ships and at all the coast stations over the years.

Then he copied the last commercial message KFS would receive, from the Liberty ship Jeremiah O'Brien/KXCH on 500kc. The op on the O'Brien said he would standby until 15 past the hour. Zell replied "better make that 18 past, OM." The operator on the O'Brien understood and said that yes, he would observe the silent period - which of course is no longer required by regulation but is absolutely demanded by tradition. Then Paul said that he'd standby "on 600". The crowd got a big kick out of that - 600 meters instead of 500kc. Subtle, but all the more meaningful for that.

I saw Tim approaching me across the room. "Get your key...", he said. Get your key! Holy mackerel, they were going to let me do it! So I got out the key, gathered up my messages, and plugged in. But then I realized: the best Morse operators in the country... the best Morse operators in the world, probably... would be listening to every dot and dash I sent! They would be too polite to say anything if I flubbed it of course... but they and I and everyone else in the room

and all the ships at sea would know! My palms started to sweat at that thought but there was no turning back now. I took Paul Zell's seat. I sent a couple if Vs to see if there was side tone in the 'phones. The knob on the key was loose! I tightened that up... and began to send.

I sent the first message from the Maritime Radio Historical Society and all went well. Then I signed the station calls.. "de KPH/KFS". Tom and a few others noticed that I sent KPH first and understood why. Then the second message from the San Francisco Maritime Historical Park. And the calls again... followed by my "sine", RD, ... and AR. I had gotten through it! And there was a round of applause for me! Thoroughly undeserved but very much appreciated. Someone even said, "Nice fist". High praise indeed in that crowd.

Then the final messages from KFS/KPH began. Paul Zell sent the first ones. Then Tim Gorman sat down and proved himself to be much more than just a competent manager. He sent the final message in meticulous Morse using the chrome-plated Vibroplex, signed off with "What hath God wrought"... then SK... and it was over.

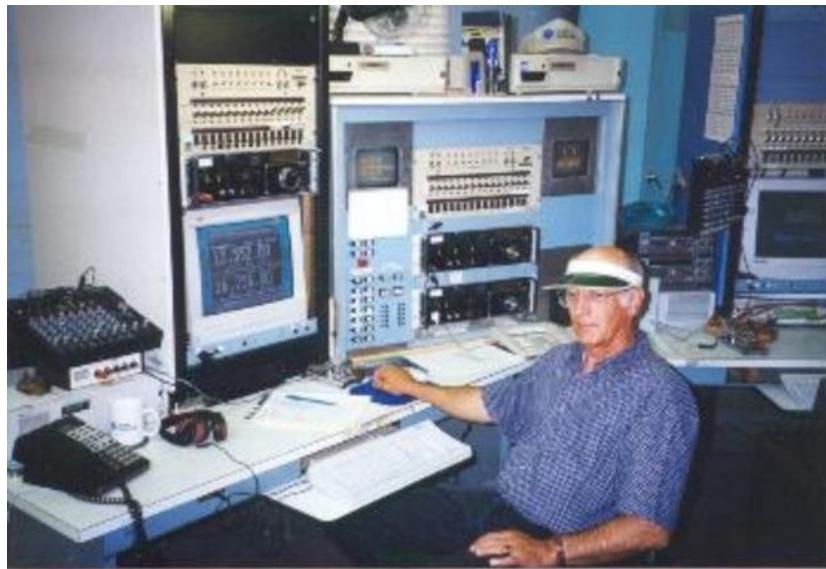
There were wet eyes in that room, mine among them. I heard more than one tough-looking old timer mumble, "I didn't think it would get to me, but..." and then turn away.

I had one further item on my agenda: to get my license endorsed showing me as an operator at KFS/KPH on the last day of North American Morse. Once again Tim Gorman showed himself to be a gracious and understanding man as he took pen in hand to write "satisfactory" in the blank provided for operator evaluation on the back of the license and add his signature.

Finally it was time to go. I gathered up my key and my photos and my papers and shook hands once more with all the great men and women who were there. And finally we were heading north on highway 1 with the beautiful Pacific sunset on our left and the green coastal hills on the right. "That was one helluva day," Tom said. "Yep," I agreed.

Vy 73,

RD  
Richard Dillman





**Front and inside of  
Thank you card from  
Troop 580 for giving  
them the Radio merit  
badge.**



## **Ham Radio on the Internet**

### **All new this issue (click on red web address)**

Anyone can submit websites for this column. I'll check them out and include them. The editor

"The New DXer's Handbook"  
Second Edition  
<http://www.k7ua.com/>  
Free download good ideas for any operating.

Article on Free Antivirus protection ratings  
[http://www.pcmag.com/article2/0,2817,2388652,00.asp?mailingID=E2A01F5644B99B4473DC2EE0DA9D882C?mailing\\_id=1209558](http://www.pcmag.com/article2/0,2817,2388652,00.asp?mailingID=E2A01F5644B99B4473DC2EE0DA9D882C?mailing_id=1209558)

Possible improvement in hearing aids  
[http://www.ecnmag.com/news/2015/03/electric-al-engineer-build-more-efficient-integrated-circuits-better-hearing-aids?et\\_cid=4494437&et\\_rid=353748193&location=top](http://www.ecnmag.com/news/2015/03/electric-al-engineer-build-more-efficient-integrated-circuits-better-hearing-aids?et_cid=4494437&et_rid=353748193&location=top)

All who helped with the project were impressed with the kids (how they payed attention, asked intelligent questions and had fun). Thanks for all the help from the club and members. A picture of the thank you card received from them is on page 10.

On another front, I ordered a \$7.50 Pixie transceiver kit. It went together easily and appeared to work when I powered it. The problem so far is at my home QTH the local radio station is too strong to hear any CW! It does pick up the local FM station very fine. Hopefully I will get to explore this toy in a quite location and see if anyone will hear it. It does fit into an Altoids tin with room for a 9v battery. So that will be a warm weather project were I can go out to a park, string an antenna and see if I can be heard. More on that as I learn.

73

Frank KA9FZR

#### Officers and Board

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Al Hovey, WA9BZW

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***See our Web Page or contact us  
for more information on***

- WARAC Memorial Scholarships
- Wisconsin QSO Party
- Midwinter Swapfest
- Worked all Wisconsin Counties Award
- Amateur Radio Classes

WARAC holds meetings on the second Tuesday of each month and board meetings on the fourth Tuesday of each month. Meetings are held at 7:00 PM at:

**St Peter's Episcopal Church  
7929 W. Lincoln Avenue  
West Allis, WI**

Entry is off the alley at the rear of the church.  
A wheel chair ramp and chair-lift are available.