



Official Publication of the  
West Allis Radio Amateur Club

# Hamtrix

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Volume 68, Issue 4 April, 2020

## APRIL CLUB HAPPENINGS



### NUT NET

3.985mhz

Monday-Saturday

8:15am CT

### NUT NET

Breakfast

8:30am fourth

Tuesday

of the month

### Milwaukee-Florida Net

Every Day on 14.290 Mhz

7:00AM - 9:15AM ET

6:00AM - 8:00AM CT

### Sunshine Committee

If you know of a member who could use a bit of cheer or support,

Barb Garnier (KD9HPS) is now the Sunshine Committee Chair.

Contact her: 414-529-3536 or [barbsewsblue@gmail.com](mailto:barbsewsblue@gmail.com).

See Page 3 for info  
On  
Virtual Club Meeting  
and  
Field Day planning meeting

### Spring cleaning your Ham Shack

Remember May meeting will be our Annual  
Pizza / Auction Night Donations are welcome.

### WARAC 2-meter net

Every Wednesday at 8pm

SEWFARS W9TJK Repeater 146.820

standard (-) offset 127.3 Hz CTCSS

if repeater down try 146.55 simplex

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## From the President's Shack

It has been an interesting month. All of our lives have been turned upside down.

With the almost country wide stay at home order we are seeing ham radio being used more than usual. That is not surprising. As hams have always been about communication. It also gives time for getting to projects on the selves that have been waiting to be done.

For obvious reasons we will not have our normal meeting with it's eye ball QSO's. With the help of Chuck W9WLX and others we are going to try and have a virtual meeting. Actually there will be two meetings: the regular monthly meeting and a field day meeting. Look on the next page for more info.

The reality is we are preparing for going back

to normal with the understanding it may not happen.

I've been experimenting with the nano vna I purchased last fall. I got to test a few antennas I had around here. One is a old discone antenna I built years ago. The other was an old commercial antenna that I had picked up.

The commercial antenna was used in parallel with another one and operated around 75 meg cycles. I really didn't expect much with it but thought it could be converted to something useful. However it was actually tuned to close to the two meter band and easily retuned in the two meter band. Now I want to measure its physical dimensions and run them through a yagi simulator. Low Swr is only one measurement. So more to follow on that experiment.

A few of us are using 146.55 as a meeting place to talk on. You're welcome to join in if you hear us or just need someone to chat with. There is also the Wednesday night two meter net at 8pm

on the 146.820 repeater. We do keep our required 6ft away. HI HI

I will try to keep club members informed of any changes in these interesting times. Keep safe and stay healthy

73  
Frank KA9FZR

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### From the Editor

No editorial due to being occupied by the President's Shack

## Field Day Planning Meeting and Club Meeting

The current pandemic has certainly changed the way we live. At this time, how Field Day will play out is unknown. I'm moving forward with planning since it will be easier to cancel rather than scramble at the last minute to pull an event together.

In addition to the Field Day meeting, there will be a short club business meeting. If you're not interested in the Field Day meeting, please join and you can drop off when the topic shifts.

Here are the meeting details:

Meeting: Field Day Planning and Club Meeting  
 When: Tuesday, April 14, 2020, 7:00 pm  
 Join: Via WebEx or Telephone Conference  
 Meeting # 290 578 504

I will be using the WebEx tool.

- Go to [www.webex.com](http://www.webex.com)
- Click JOIN located at the top of the screen
- Enter meeting number 290 578 504
- If you get a prompt to install a client, cancel the install. You do not need to run from a client unless you choose
  - Click on the Open the Desktop App link located mid screen and complete the information
  - The meeting screen will open and you're all set! You should see eight buttons at the bottom of the screen to control functions.

If you mouse over them, pop up text will describe it for you.

Alternately you can join by audio conference only using a TOLL number. Please do not join by both methods since there is a limit to 100 participants and you would be using 2 slots as well as causing audio feedback.

Call: 408-418-9388  
 Meeting number: 290578504#  
 Attendee ID number: just hit the '#' button

"See" you there!

Chuck Dellis -W9WLX

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## **WARAC Club Meeting Minuets**

### **March 10, 2019**

**Meeting called to order 7:04 pm by Frank KA9FZR.**

17 club members present. There were 1 visitors, Feroz WU9N.

#### **Club Business:**

- Sendix Bratwurst fundraiser is scheduled this year! May 16th @ 3600 South Moorland Road, New Berlin store location. Frank KA9FZR is the chairman.

- Mike WO9B Swapfest Coordinator. Planning of the swapfest is going well, they have cashed our deposit check.

- The annual Field Day (FD) event is being led by Chuck W9WLX. First meeting date is TBD. “Maybe we will only have 1 FD station this year.” “Then, what about FT8 station?” A FD sign up sheet was passed around.

#### **Club Presentation:**

Wisconsin QSO Party March 15th by Tom K9BTQ.

March 15th, Sunday, 1-8pm local time. WI QSO party will be 42 years old this year!

Propagation discussion ensued. 40 meter daytime skip zone is minimum of 400 miles, this doesn't work well for WI stations working WI stations.

As of lately, (bottom of solar cycle) 40 meters & 20 meters goes long early in the day.

Therefore, 80 meters may take on greater activity.

#### **Scholarships by Howard WA9AXQ**

Amateur Radio Digital Communications (ARDC) is partnering with ARRL scholarship foundation, to match dollar for a dollar the ARRL scholarship grants.

Ferd K9OGZ a longtime member of our club became a silent key (SK) March 1th.

#### **Meeting Wrap up:**

Who is going to the Jefferson Swapfest?

#### **Odds & Ends.**

A pool was organized, betting on what time Phil would arrive, Phil arrived @ 7:00pm. Nobody won.

**Meeting was adjourned at 8:17pm.**

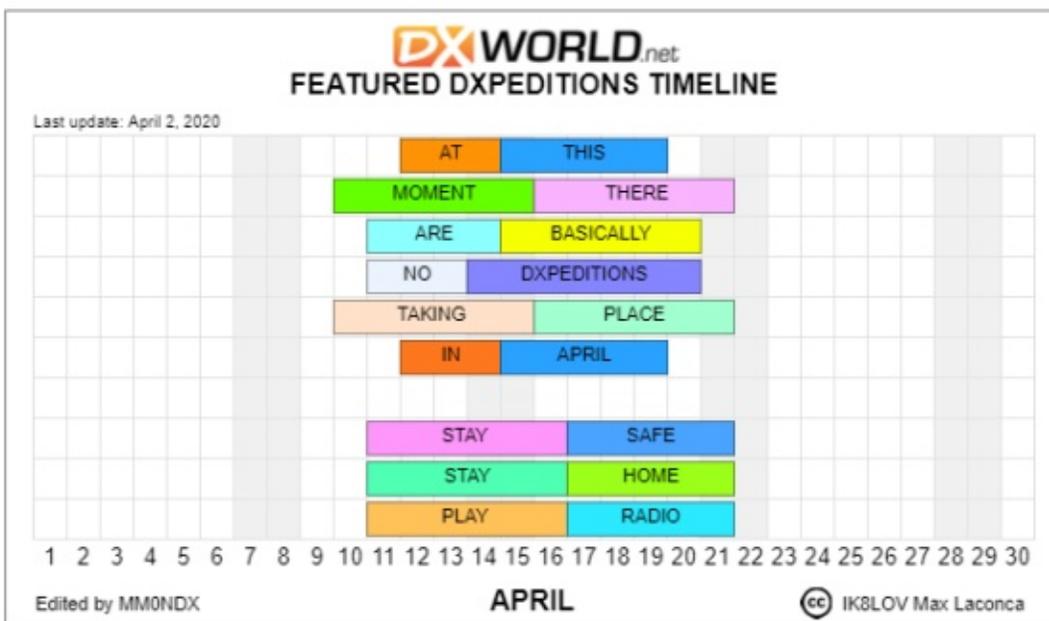
Coffee, donuts and conversation followed.

Respectfully submitted,  
David Garnier  
WB9OWN

# DX / CONTEST UPDATE

[http://www.hamradiotimeline.com/timeline/dxw\\_timeline\\_1\\_1.php](http://www.hamradiotimeline.com/timeline/dxw_timeline_1_1.php)

DX: Check out the DX World monthly chart. WOW. OK, so the planned activations aren't happening, that does not mean the DX isn't. 10 meters shows signs of life. 15 is alive and well at the right times. 20 and 40, while not "cup runeth over" active, are serving up goodies every day. And 80, oh my goodness 80. Stay up late, like past midnight late, and see what you can drag into the log. Last night it was V31 and IK2 for me. Keep on eye on the clusters. Get smart about checking the bands. Grey Line, Grey Line, Grey Line!!!



CONTESTS: Major contests are kind-of, sort-of in the bag for this year. Coming up on the spring/summer season, the events tend toward local/regional affairs. But geez are there a ton of them. State QSO Parties are easy and fun. You don't have to work them like your license depends on it. Just check in, make few Q's and go cut the lawn!! • — • — •

## LOCK-DOWN BLUES By Mike Johnson, WO9B

So this corona thing is a good opportunity to play radio.....all the time. Reminds me of the story of the fisherman who retired and then got bored with fishing after a couple of weeks. Ouch. At this time we have not been invaded by the virus, but the wait continues. Not a good thing. We are all dealing with this in our own way, which hopefully works for you. I've put a number of radio projects on the burner for now. The only problem is this dang social distancing and shut down stuff is getting in the way. One thing that jumps at me is my sudden unwillingness to wait for part deliveries from

China. 3 weeks of waiting has taken on a different meaning. Plus when the package arrives, there is a bit of suspicion wondering if/where the darn thing has been. Such is the day we are living in.

So it is time to move projects from the "Want" column to the "Done" column. First on the list is to add an automatic antenna tuner. Sound's simple. The main complication is the antenna being matched is a doublet and matching ladder line can be stressful for a antenna tuner. Using only 100 W's eliminates the high power models, so at least there is that. Cutting to the quick, the MJF 939 model was selected mainly due to its stellar reviews when paired to the FT-891 and its alleged 1600 ohm matching capacity.

Hold that thought. MFJ. Stellar reviews. What could possibly go wrong?

Turn's out HRO is the least cost provider. I'm thinking cool and convenient. Except of course Milw HRO has no stock. Plano, TX however ships the next day. Wonderful. As expected, HRO delivers right on schedule. The box looks great. Nothing damaged. The adventure begins.

The well established procedure for accepting MFJ products is followed: 1) Shake the product. If nothing is loose or rattling, go to step Two. 2) Open the case and inspect the connections. This unfortunately is not my strong suit, but once again the tuner is rated a pass. 3) Magic Smoke Test: Plug it in and start cooking. Pleased to report, this test also passed. I am astounded at this point. Is it possible to have unknown karma reserves? Me? Karma abundance. Not likely.

Not likely at all, in fact. On the 130' doublet, only 40 and 20 will tune. Not a good start. Without going into the quirky way tuning is engaged due to the limitation of the FT891, something is very wrong. How to tell if it is the MFJ tuner or something else, that is the trick. It's not like you can just jump up to HRO and get a replacement unit either. Again, due to the funky tuning interface, cannot tell if it is the unit or if the match is just a bridge too far for the tuner's impedance range. I'm thinking 4:1 balun is the next step, but given the QA reputation of MFJ.....

This is the part of the adventure where the shut down and shelter at home realities start to get important. The HRO purchase rules only give a short time to return/replace the product after which you need to deal with MFJ solely. Not so much a problem in normal times, but today, getting new parts starts to feel like a week of waiting time wasted. Hmm. That's no good. This situation needs to be acted on more quickly. 4:1 Balun, hey that's something I can do. The ARRL Antenna Book and <https://www.dj0ip.de/balun-stuff/1-vs-2-core-balun/> provide the design for a nice 4:1 two-core Guanella balun. Why the Guanella? Because it is a

current balun which also acts as a common-mode-choke.

I've got all the stuff in the parts bucket: FT140-43 toroids, magnet wire, BNC connector, project case. What's more, it should only take an hour to wind it all together.

That was a little optimistic, it took 2 hours:



And it even works!! The tuner is up and having fun on 160 thru 10. A bit of a struggle on a couple of the WARAC bands, but that is expected. 160 meters was a surprise. The quirky tuning process remains, but time and experience should smooth that out. One thing is the clack of the relays is really LOUD.

Just like a guiro.



Wrapping up the project, the balun is installed in a project case and is now outside doing its 4:1 transforming thing so the 939 can do its matching thing. I'll give it a week for troubleshooting before I seal up the enclosure. It's nice when a plan comes together.



Next project: 6 meter Squalo Antenna. • —• —••

## WARAC MID-WEEK PARK ACTIVATIONS 2020 EDITION

### Shelter In Place

This is the time of year where the planning becomes so much fun. Not so much this year. At this point, we are NOT planning any group expeditions. Best to be safe. Best to be respectful of others. But the season is not over. We may get the chance to set some up in the later part of the summer season. Fingers Crossed.

Where we can't do the group thing, you can certainly do the individual activation. I went to Valley View Park last week and had a great time. YOU CAN TOO!!!

So get out there. You can borrow my dog. He works cheap and requires just a modest walk at the end of your radio thrill ride.

If you are really a go getter, go to one of the State Parks and do a POTA activation. They are the rage this year and your popularity is virtually assured. Plus entry into the parks is FREE. Such a good deal.



## Me and my Discone antenna.

Back when I was a new technician there was a article in the December 1978 QST entitled “An Inexpensive Multi-band VHF Antenna” by David Geiser WA2ANU

It talked about building an antenna that worked well on 2 meter 220 and 440 mhz using chicken wire fencing. My type of project. The antenna was what is know as a discone antenna. I had bought a basic 2 meter FM transceiver and this looked like an antenna I could make.

I did make one and used it. Even to the extent of mounting magnets on the bottom of the cone and mounting it on my car. It worked but sure got you a lot of strange looks from other Chicago drivers. HI HI I did get a more conventional antenna for the car and the rig. The discone stayed with us when we moved to Hales Corners and resided in the basement only coming out occasionally to test a radio.

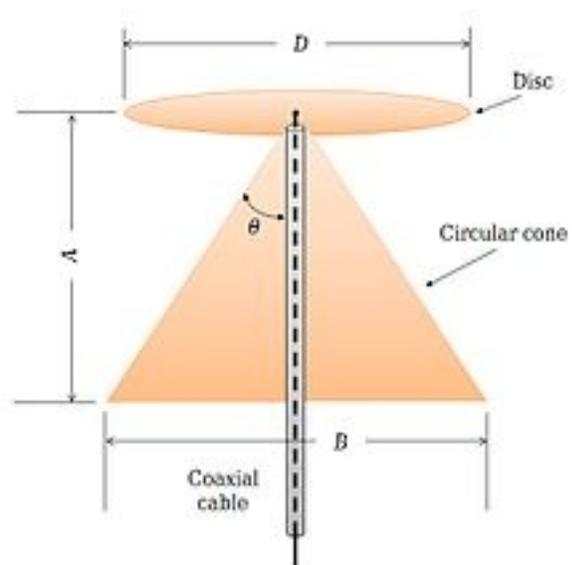
Over the years I always kept an eye out for articles on discone antennas. They are interesting antennas. You see plans and advertising for them that are usable from HF to microwave. Their pattern is like a quarter wave antenna. But they don't need a ground plane.

I never took the time to see what the measured SWR was. So now that I've got the Nano VNA, I was able to measure it. It works as advertised below the cut off the SWR is very high then mostly flat below two to one from the two meter band to around nine hundred mhz

So that's what I have done during the “stay at home, order”. HI HI

73

Frank • — • —•





### **Gladys Kathleen Parkin**

At just fifteen years old, Gladys Kathleen Parkin (1901-1990) received her professional ham radio license. Basically, this makes her a total badass, considering that she'd had her amateur radio license since age nine. She was featured on the cover of *The Electrical Experimenter*, and at the time was the “youngest successful female applicant for a radio license ever examined by the Government at that time,” according to a 1916 article in the *San Francisco Chronicle*. Parkin began her hobby at age five with her brother, and was the first woman in California to pass the first-class radio license.

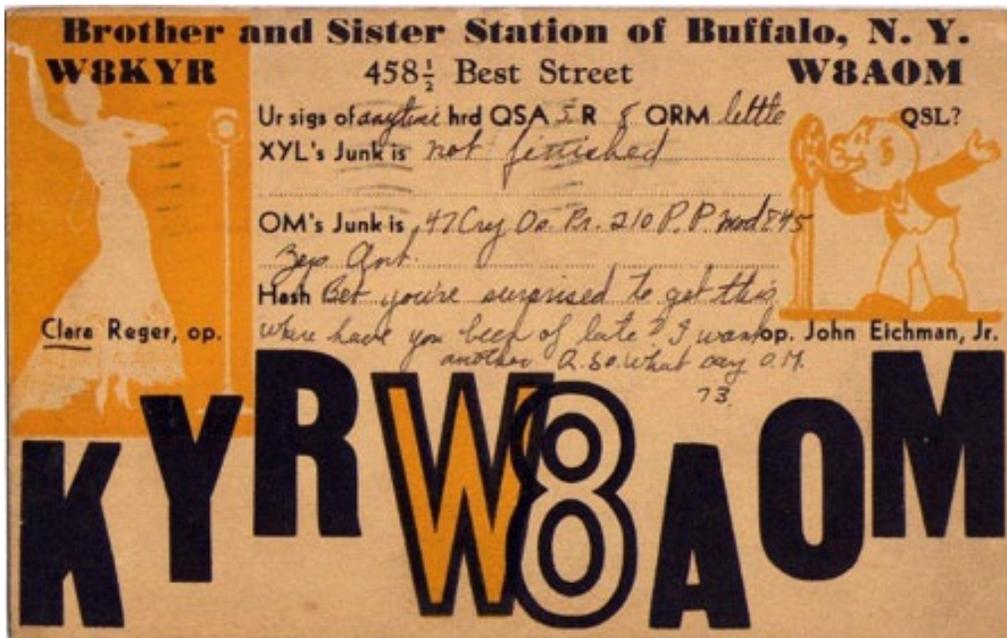
Parkin's call sign is 6S0, and she spent her life in the radio industry, developing a reputation for building her own equipment. Here she is, quoted in *The Electrical Experimenter*:

*With reference to my ideas about the wireless profession as a vocation or worthwhile hobby for women, I think wireless telegraphy is a most fascinating study, and one which could very easily be taken up by girls, as it is a great deal more interesting than the telephone and telegraph work, in which so many girls are now employed. I am only fifteen. ... But the interest in wireless does not end in the knowledge of the code. You can gradually learn to make all your own instruments, as I have done with my ¼ kilowatt set. There is always more ahead of you, as wireless telegraphy is still in its infancy.*

## Olive Carroll

Canadian-born Olive J. Carroll had a passion for travel and exploration while growing up during the 1930s and 40s – and radio was her gateway to the world. Carroll’s interest in amateur radio began in high school, but she eventually turned it into her career and attended the Sprott Shaw School of Radio, where she earned her second class radio certificate in 1944. She was hired by the Canadian Department of Transport as an interceptor operator, and a few years later, when an opportunity opened on the Norwegian passenger freighter M/S Siranger, she accepted the position—having never before traveled farther than 500 miles from her home. Like Packer, Carroll was driven by a desire to explore the world by operating from the ocean.

In 1994, she authored a book about her experiences called *Deep Sea ‘Sparks’: A Canadian Girl in the Norwegian Merchant Navy*. The San Francisco Maritime Museum has recreated a ship’s radio room with the same equipment Carroll used during her time on the M/S Siranger.



## Clara Reger

It’s impossible to talk about notable female hams without acknowledging the work of Clara Reger, who received her call sign in 1933 at age thirty-five. Reger had a long career as an operator, and managed disaster communications after WWII. Known for her exceptional Morse code skills, Reger spent much of her life teaching others how to become operators. She also received the Edison Award for teaching a fourteen-year-old boy without arms to send Morse code with his feet.

But Reger is also known for her signature salutation, which she created especially for women communicating with other women—the salutation ‘33,’ which meant love sealed with friendship. Reger knew that to hear another girl’s voice on the other end was rare and special. What a gift, to find kinship with women, through the radio, across the ocean, across the globe!

YL 33 is considered sacred by female hams, and there’s a poem dedicated to Reger’s accomplishments and passion for radio communications. You can read it in full on the Young

Ladies Radio League's website, but here's a passage:

*There's no real definition  
But its meaning is known well.  
It's how a YL says good evening  
To another friend YL.*

"The Feminine Wireless Amateur," a 1916 article in The Electrical Experimenter, the writer says:

JUST because a man, Signor Guglielmo Marconi by name, invented commercial wireless telegraphy does not mean for a moment that the fair sex cannot master its mysteries. [...]

*Women seem to progress excellently in the engineering branches. Primarily this is so because her brain is quick of action, and moreover she usually will be found to have extremely well-balanced ideas as to proportions, so essential in designing. A wonderful imagination coupled to a number of other worthy faculties help to make a really fine combination, so that we find a steadily growing number of women architects, mechanical and electrical experts, radio operators, civil engineers, ad lib. What we need is more of them in the higher positions, where the square root and binomial theorem are everyday quantities.*



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Newsletter Editor  
Frank Humpal, KA9FZR  
fhump@milwpc.com

Webmaster past president  
Mike Johnson WO9B

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



**WEST ALLIS RADIO AMATEUR CLUB, INC.**  
West Allis Radio Club  
PO Box 511381  
New Berlin, WI 53151-1381

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

- WARAC Memorial Scholarships
- Wisconsin QSO Party
- Midwinter Swapfest
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- Amateur Radio Classes

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

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