



Official Publication of the  
West Allis Radio Amateur Club

# Hamtrix

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Volume 71, Issue 8 August, 2022

## AUGUST 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).

### August Picnic Meeting Meeting

August 9, 2022 between 6:00pm to 8:00pm

New Berlin's Lions Park

Off of Lincoln Rd.

Between Moorland and Sunnyslope

**NO Premeeting Dinner**

**SEE PAGE 14 for more info**

**Sendik's fundraiser September 10, 2022  
11am to 4pm**

**3600 South Moorland Road  
New Berlin, WI 53151**

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## Editor's Corner

August already... it has been a mixed up summer for me. Went to the 4th of July fireworks last night August 2nd It rained on 4th of July. Come Friday it will be my third attempt to get my heart pacemaker upgraded. Hope the operation happens. It's hard to schedule for things like that.

The pacemakers these days have a wireless feature that allows them to call home and report problems or just do a data dump, if asked to. This new one will need special wires with a coil in them so they can de-fib if needed. Better living with electronics.

The August meeting will be our annual picnic with pizza, etc. We will try a new place Lions Park in New Berlin. It is just north of our normal meeting place (the NB community center).

On September 10th we will have our next Sendik's fund raiser. This will be our second one at the Moorland Rd location. The earnings were lower than in the past. We'll see how it goes.

RE: Ham Radio I'm still experimenting with my patio set up. No contacts yet but we will see. It does receive well and probably transmits ok but QRP power is always interesting.

73  
Frank KA9FZR • — • — •



## 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 Club Meeting Minutes – July 12, 2022

Club meeting was called to order by Feroz Ghose WU9N at 7:04 pm.

Attendance was 18 club members with 2 visitors, Gil WB9TFH & Donna WB9TFF.

Last months club minutes published in Hamtrix was accepted “as published” and was seconded.

**Treasurers Report**, by Bill N9KPH. Bill was absent and Feroz WU9N gave Bill’s short report.

“Very little to report for the second quarter ending 6/30.

Income: \$396 (includes \$191 from Sendik's event)

Expenses: \$80 (Equipment sale expenses per Mike)

July Field Day Expenses: \$173 (Food, water, soda, chips)

Checking Balance: \$10,828

Scholarship Savings Balance: \$4,534”

**Field Day Results.** Dave WB9OWN gave a report, see minutes attachment.

Carol Zach passed away July 8, 2022. She will be missed at Tuesday morning breakfasts.

<https://www.legacy.com/us/obituaries/name/carol-zach-obituary?id=35711593>

**Trap Development is back on the menu** per Mike Johnson WO9B, working out the details for 50 watts.

**Remote Radio Demo** by Mike Johnson WO9B. Looking for people to log into his station, the remote software can be found here. <https://www.remotehams.com/>

Mike’s radio is Icom 7300. A very nice demo was given by Mike.

Slow speed CW net is still meeting Mondays at 8pm. WB0AFB repeater 147.045 is being used for net coordination frequency. All are welcomed.

Meeting ended @ 8:08pm and coffee and donuts followed.

Respectfully Transcribed and Submitted

David Garnier WB9OWN

Secretary WARAC, July 27, 2022 . \_ . \_ .

**2022 Challenge for our membership. Have someone you meet, Ham or Ham wannabe come to a meeting this year!**

## Field Day 2022 Results & Observations

### TOTAL 268 Q's

|                                   |     |         |                                                        |            |
|-----------------------------------|-----|---------|--------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| 40 meters                         | FT4 | 82 Q's  | Phone = 1 Point<br>CW = 2 points<br>Digital = 2 points | 164        |
| 20 meters                         | SSB | 62 Q's  |                                                        | 82         |
|                                   | CW  | 107 Q's |                                                        | 214        |
| 6 meters                          | SSB | 16 Q's  |                                                        | 16         |
|                                   | CW  | 1 Q's   |                                                        | 2          |
| GOTA Q's don't count              | SSB | 37 Q's  |                                                        | 0          |
| Sub Total                         |     |         |                                                        | 478        |
| Power Multiplier 100W = 2X points |     |         | <b>Total</b>                                           | <b>956</b> |

A Big Thank-You to two non club members Gil WB9TFH & Donna WB9TFE, they brought their VHF station and operating under W9FK call.

### Bonus Points

|                          |                                   |                          |            |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|------------|
| 100% Emergency Power     | 100 per transmitter               | 2 stations (VHF is free) | 200        |
| Public Location          | DJ Mackie – EN52SW56QP            |                          | 100        |
| Public Information Table | Visitor's log & ARRL HR handouts  |                          | 100        |
| W1AW Field Day Message   | AA9RK supplied                    |                          | 100        |
| Youth Participation      | 20 per youth QSO                  |                          | 80         |
| Educational Activity     | Morse code beads                  |                          | 100        |
| Social Media             | Facebook, "ARRL FD Group" posting |                          | 100        |
| Safety Officer           | Barb KD9HPS                       |                          | 100        |
| <b>TOTAL</b>             |                                   |                          | <b>880</b> |

Total Score About **1845**

### Take Aways

- Study the FD bonus scoring areas rules before contest, we missed points.
- Almost need a full time photographer to document the bonus points check-offs.
- GOTA didn't track how many Q's each operator made, therefore Dave missed bonusing by 1 Q and Barb by 3 Q's. Duh.
- **Field Day filters work!** (This was huge plus) Thank you Gil WB9TFH for bring them!
- Cannot have enough antennas (ropes in the trees,) I should know better (GOTA.)
- If someone new operates your station add their initials in the logging program!
- Surprise, the LIPO batteries lasted 13 hours w/o recharging.
- Recharging Laptop batteries during the contest is doable but still an issue.
- 6 Meters propagation barely opened, it stunk.



# 16 Visitors to Field Day Site.

\* Kids

Visitors 6/24/2022

\* Easton Roeder Jeff Connor  
Judy Roeder KD9VGH  
Jerry Roeder

Erich Roeder

\* Colton Roeder  
Ashley Roeder  
PATRICK MORETT KA1RB

Louis Golembiewski W9GSV

Janet Bennett KC9FQC

Michael Martin W9AAM

Sandy + Linx Martin

Melissa Dickinson KB9DBS

\* Jami Dickinson

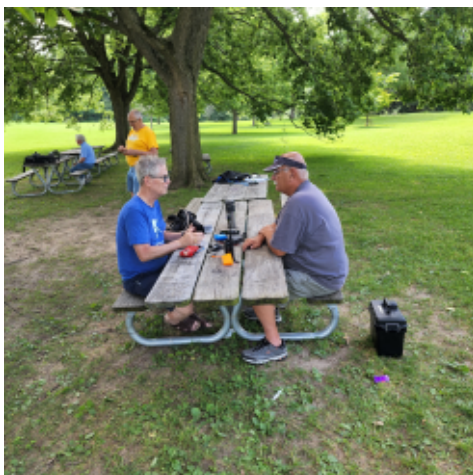
Pat Hamilton WF9H

Paul Hamai  
KD9HPS  
Goth Station

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## 2022 August Notes

July in the park has been GREAT!! A bit of weather, but for the most part the weekly outings have been just what we wait all year for. We have been seeing at least three radios being setup and everyone jockeying for position on the band of their choice. Most are working QRP so the close setups don't cause much more than a temporary bout of QRN.

We've had a great series of parks to play in this past month. LaFoilette in West Allis was a new park to the group and turned out to be a real gem. The other stops on the caravan were Malone Park in New Berlin, Grant Park in South Milwaukee and Lion's Legend Park in Franklin.

August represents our summer swan song month. So if you have yet to join the group, this is your time. We've crossed the halfway point on this year's season and I have to say it has been a real pleasure.

Everyone is welcome and we always have an extra spot on the park bench. We always have more assistant operators than we have radios. That seems to be part of the charm. We try to accommodate everyone by selecting parks with good shelters, plenty of picnic seating and nearby parking. This is a wonderful place to bring your latest project or solicit opinions on your shack problems. Bringing a radio is completely optional. Most of the folks are there for a bit of sun and conversation.

So come and join the fun. After all, it's only an hour!!

**When:** Every Wednesday from 2:00 PM to 3:00 PM +/-

**Where:** New Park every week. Announcements are on the WARAC Facebook Page

**Join our mailing list to receive the weekly announcement** direct to your inbox. To join, send a note to [mike@palomonet.com](mailto:mike@palomonet.com)

**Pictures from the July 20, 2022**

**Wednesday**

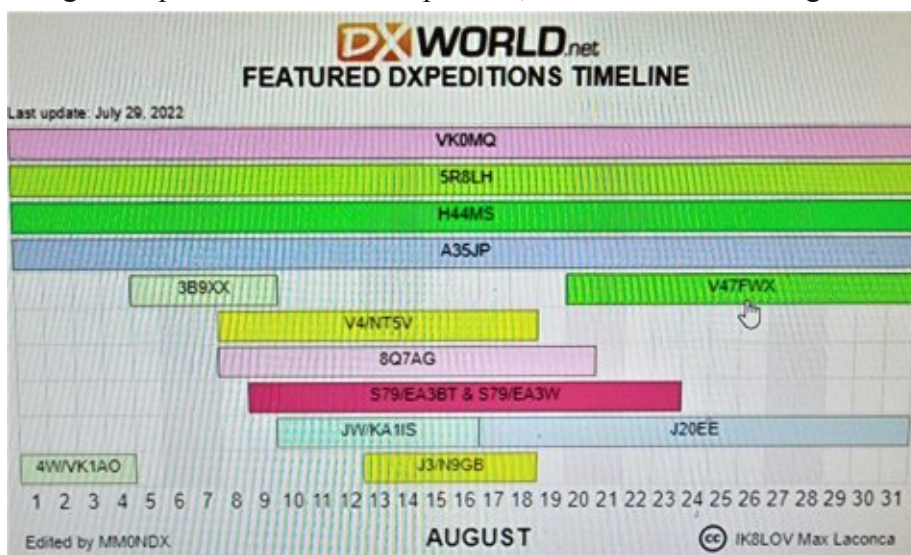
**Grant Park Area 5 activation**

**Thanks Al WA9BZW**



## DX UPDATE:

I sadly report that W9HOG, Alan Kogerup a very avid DXer and member of GMDXA is a SK. W9DXCC is fast approaching on September 15-18 in Naperville, IL. Not too late to register.



During August look for Spratly Island and Timor-Leste to be on the air as well as those below

### Propagation:

I recently found out that the sunspot count uses an old way of counting and is not as high as you may think. A count of 11 does not mean 11. It is really 1, as the group counts for 10 and then there is 1 sunspot in that group making 11. Interesting.

### Contesting:

Maryland QSO Party: 1400Z Aug 13 to 0400Z Aug 14

Hawaii QSO Party: 0400Z Aug 27 to 0400Z Aug 29

Kansas QSO Party: 1400Z Aug 27 to 0200Z Aug 28 and 1400Z Aug 28 to 2000Z Aug 28

Ohio QSO Party: 1000Z Aug 27 to 0400Z Aug 28

There are more contests in August.

<https://www.contestcalendar.com/contestcal.html>

### Special Event Stations:

For special event station listings (there are many) check out:

<https://www.425dxn.org/index.php?op=wcal>

If you have further ideas or suggestions for this page please let WA9BZW (Al) know.

[wa9bzw@arrl.net](mailto:wa9bzw@arrl.net)





[https://irishfest.galaxydigital.com/agency/detail/ham-ops/?agency\\_id=136925](https://irishfest.galaxydigital.com/agency/detail/ham-ops/?agency_id=136925)

**Any Questions contact**  
 Roger Heindl (AC9BT)  
 Irish Fest Radio and Shuttle  
 Coordinator  
[rogerh@irishfest.com](mailto:rogerh@irishfest.com)  
 414-688-1680 cell

Click on Web site above for complete info partial info below.

We are looking for Licensed Amateur Radio volunteers for this year's Irish Fest, a 501(c)3 organization. MCTS will NOT be running free transit buses so it's up to us to monitor, coordinate, dispatch and schedule buses for the festival. We are continuing to monitor COVID-19. Masks and disinfectant will be available upon request in the main office.

### **When**

We need help during the following times:

August 18th 2022 4:00PM to 11:00PM

August 19th 2022 3:00PM FRI to 1:00AM SAT

August 20th 2022 11:00AM SAT to 1:00AM SUN

August 21st 2022 10:00AM to 10:00PM

### **Volunteer benefits:**

FREE entry to Irish Fest! As a volunteer you get in free.

"Amateur Radio Volunteers" specifically, may ride the Shuttles for FREE on the day(s) you are scheduled to volunteer.

Free \$5 food coupon(s) for every 4 hours of volunteer work.

Hams have the option to park in lot P near the south gate. Hams that want to park on the Summerfest grounds must be in the database 48 hours in advance so we can distribute LOT P passes for you. Limited availability to Parking Lot P so register early. A \$5 co-pay from you is required to park in LOT P along with the pass that we provide.

Hams may ride the Shuttles from the Park and Rides for free to get to the festival grounds. You may choose, Brown Deer Road Park and Ride, Watertown Plank Park and Ride, State Fair Park and Ride, or the College Avenue Park and Ride (East or West side).

Satisfaction knowing you've helped keep this important cultural festival available to our city and visitors from all over the world!



# Radio is Magic

- If you aren't impressed by the fact that you can wobble a few electrons in a wire and thereby wobble a few electrons in a wire half way around the world, you have no soul.



## Nut Net Breakfast to start, AGAIN

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 will once again meet at Gensis Restaurant, corner of HWY 100 and Beloit Road, Greenfield, WI. Looking forward to seeing you, mark your calendar.

Phil, W9NAW



Aug 2022

\*

Hamtrix

\*

By Michael Johnson, WO9B

## VARAC - Digital HF Chat

We are taking a break from DMR this month. After all, there are other digital modes beyond VHF/UHF DMR. Hard to believe, I know. Even more surprising is we are heading back to the familiar ground where most of us began our ham journey: HF.

There is a newish mode that is starting to gain traction on the HF bands. The mode is called Varac (<https://www.varac-hamradio.com/>) and is the latest entry into keyboard-based QSO's. Let's take a deeper dive into this promising "chat" mode.

First, the name "Varac" is a mashup of the popular TNC replacement software VARA with a C added to the end as a tip of the hat for Chat.. If you are active in WinLink you will have run into VARA. This is a quite able, slightly controversial, modem protocol that rivals the proprietary PACTOR 3 for data through-put. Though VARA is also not open source, it is available in a free trial mode which does handicap the performance, while being more than equal to the data handling of the traditional TNC models. For \$69 you can unleash the full power of VARA, resulting in something short of 9600 baud performance in a 2300 hz bandwidth. The slightly controversial part has to do with the multi-modal modulation which technically (arguably?) respects the FCC's symbol rate limitations. There is also the bugger of encryption to deal with. So if any of that is an issue for you, or you want to play it safe, stick with the free trial version.

The other attraction of VARA is its SNR performance. While not quite in the league of WSJT-X, typical of the new digital modes, it has remarkably good weak signal capability. Do note, however, data speeds are related to SNR, so stronger signals equal faster messaging. Here is a comparison of various popular WinLink modes vs the 500 Hz Free Trial VARA version.



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## HAMFEST/CONVENTION

### **08/27/2022 - Circus City Swapfest**

Location: Baraboo, WI      Type: ARRL Hamfest

Sponsor: Yellow Thunder Amateur Radio Club

Website: <http://yellowthunder.org>

### **08/28/2022 - Chippewa Valley Amateur Radio Club HamFest**

Location: Chippewa Falls, WI      Type: ARRL Hamfest

Sponsor: CVARC - Chippewa Valley Amateur Radio Club

Website: <http://w9cva.org/hamfest>

### **09/10/2022 - Ozaukee Radio Club Regional Fall Swapfest**

Location: Cedarburg, WI      Type: ARRL Hamfest

Sponsor: Ozaukee Radio Club (ORC)

Website: <https://www.ozaukeeradioclub.org/>

## **Wisconsin Antique Radio Club Inc.**

**Go to their Web Site at**

**<https://warci.org/calendar/>**

**For Dates Location and info**

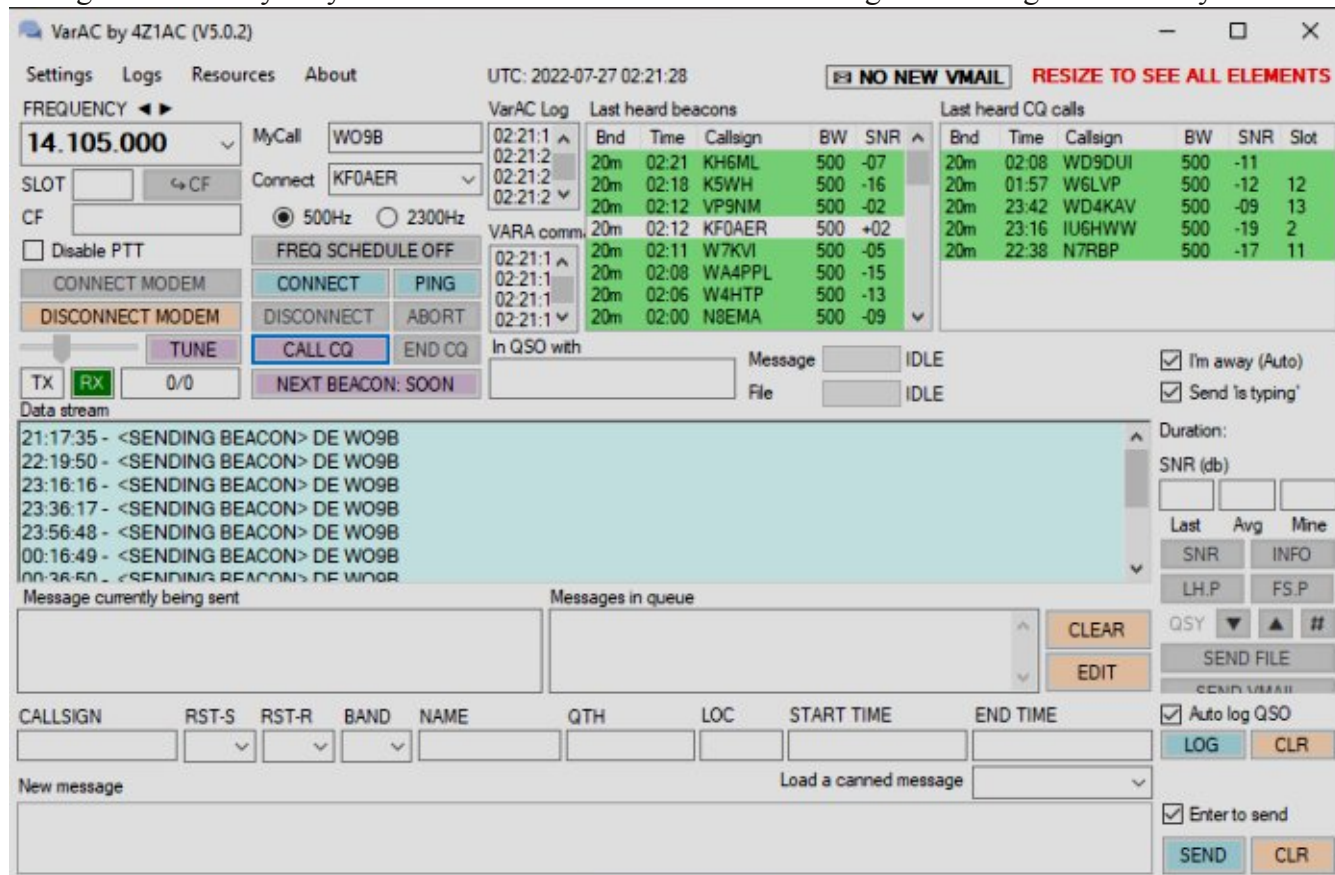


I have had Varac on my radar for three months or so. Just recently I've actually had the time to load it up and test drive it. HF chat has always been attractive to me. As I worked my way into digital modes, naturally my first stop was PSK31. That proved to be QSO via macros. Not great. The FT8 wave came and all but took over the digital HF game. The first real attempt at a chat client utilizing the FT8 protocol is JS8Call. I tried, I mean really tried, to like that mode, but for me the slow data rate of FT8 along with the macro plague leftover from PSK..and I never got it going. Additionally, the JS8Call user window was filled with stations, but nobody was actually around. It was just stations that were operating in zombie mode. When Varac hit the scene, my enthusiasm was tempered by my JS8Call experience. I was not in a hurry to get it up and going based on that disappointing experience.

But I was wrong. Way wrong. My short time with Varac has been exceptional. QSO's are easy to come by and the conversations are real, not macro based. The data speed hits just right being fast enough that you are not waiting and waiting but also you don't need to type at superhuman speeds to stay in front of the messaging. For lack of a better work, I'd call it conversational speed. Oh, and the best part: Real Time Spell Check. Very cool.

The user interface window is easy to work with. A trip through the operation manual and 15 minutes later you'll have it pretty well figured out. Basic operation is you type your messages in the New Message window at the bottom and read your conversation in the Data Stream window in the middle. The rest of the interface consists of information and control buttons. It takes a couple of rounds to get the hang of it. Not difficult.

Starting a chat is very easy. You can either double click on a callsign in either green box or you can call



CQ by clicking on the "Call CQ" box. That is pretty much it. If all goes well, you will be automatically connected to another station and then it is just a matter of saying "hello" and doing what hams do best... start talking. Here is a partial transcript of a recent chat:

15:27:40 - <STARTING CQ CALL> CQ DE WO9B, CQ DE WO9B, STANDING BY ON SLOT  
 <END OF CQ CALL>  
 15:28:26 - INCOMING CONNECTION REQUEST.. Hold tight!  
 15:28:31 - CONNECTED TO KF0AER  
 15:28:45 - WO9B> Welcome :-) de WO9B  
 15:28:51 - KF0AER> de KF0AER <R+01>  
 15:29:05 - WO9B> <NAME:Mike>  
 <QTH:New Berlin, WI>  
 <LOC:EN52>  
 <R+00>  
 15:29:24 - KF0AER> Hello de <NAME:Tom><LOC:DM79mn><QTH:Littleton, CO>  
 15:29:54 - WO9B> Good Morning Tom....Top of the day to you!!  
 15:30:20 - KF0AER> Thanks. Just monitoring a bit this AM and saw you call CQ.  
 15:30:39 - VARAC - Digital HF ChatKF0AER> I'm really supposed to be working!  
 15:31:21 - WO9B> Thanks for calling back. I am twiddling about this morning and need to focus and start my day  
 15:31:30 - WO9B> I guess we are both on Walk-About

...yada, yada, yada...

#### VARAC - Digital HF Chat

15:54:12 - KF0AER> RR. Mike, I need to actually get to work. It's been great to meet you and chat a bit. You have a great day and I'll CUL.  
 15:54:54 - WO9B> Ditto. Thanks Tom. Nice to meet you. Enjoy the QRP digi 73's  
 15:55:06 - KF0AER> 73 de Tom  
 15:55:36 - DISCONNECTED FROM KF0AER

Installation of the necessary software is a breeze. The Varac website, forum, Facebook page.....have all the information needed. There are YouTubes aplenty covering your specific radio. If you have successfully installed WSJT-X, you have all the expertise you need. This is not a technical challenge in the least. As for operating, I started out at 50 W and have reduced my power level to 25 W. It has not been an issue. I have been hanging out on 20 meters in the day and 40 meters at night. I have called CQ 3 or 4 times and ALWAYS get a response.

The Varac software is in active development. New versions are released frequently. Maybe too often. The community surrounding the software is vibrant and verbose. It has been a lot of fun going through the learning curve. I can't underscore enough how trouble free setting up and using Varac has been. The basic concept is to chat and that is pretty much what takes place. I found myself thinking I was missing something, that there must be more to it. But alas, no, this has been almost the easiest software to play with. You will go from rookie to pro in one or two QSO's. Load it up, you won't be sorry. • — • — •



# August Monthly Meeting Pizza in the Park

Tuesday Aug 9th  
6:00 PM to 8:00 PM



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

## Lions Park

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

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!!



### Driving Directions

Lion's Park is located directly north of the New Berlin Community Center. Picnic Shelter #2 is located in the NE corner of the park. Two Parking Areas are available, both a short walk to the Shelter.



**DON'T KEY LIKE A PHONE MAN**



## **SLOW SPEED CW QSO NET**

***Monday's - 8:00 PM - WB0AFB 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  
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Vice President  
Feeroz Ghose WU9N

Secretary  
Dave Garnier WB9OWN

Treasurer  
Bill Reed N9KPH

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