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**Milwaukee
Radio
Amateurs'
Club**



*"The ARRL's oldest
affiliated club"*



HAMATEUR CHATTER

Edited by Dick Strassburger, N9EEE

November 2020

NOVEMBER 2020

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AND THEN THERE WAS A PANDEMIC

Just as the club was getting rolling into it's busy time of the year, COVID-19 hit and shut down Field Day, picnics, activations, auction, potluck dinner, and in-person club meetings. This club knows how to be resilient and keep everyone connected and moving forward with the hobby; through FM net meetings, zoom presentations, club nets, and getting on the air individually during Field Day. Talking to each other on the radio has been lethargic as well as preventing isolation or depression. While we're all hopeful this awful coronavirus will end soon enough, let's use our radio and bench skills to keep us meaningfully involved in the hobby and each other. Meanwhile, the Board of Directors will continue thinking of creative ways to engage the membership. Be safe. Stay healthy.

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S SHACK



I would like to thank the membership for being flexible during this pandemic. As a board, we knew it was important to find ways to stay in contact with our members. The monthly meeting nets on the club repeater followed by the Zoom meetings have helped us stay connected. At our last board meeting, we decided that we need to start sending out a newsletter again. This is the first of hopefully many to come over the next few months. Please let us know if there is some information that you want in the newsletter.

Our November meeting net will be held on November 19th at 7pm on the club repeater followed by a Zoom meeting at 8pm. This will be the first meeting

where we will have a presentation. Dean KC9REN will give a brief presentation about receiving Slow Scan TV from the International Space Station. We have decided to have a meeting on December 17 this year so we can stay connected. Here is the Zoom information for joining our meetings. The zoom link below is all you need to connect. For full details including Meeting ID and Password, visit our home page at W9RH.org.

Click [HERE](#) for zoom access.

Looking ahead to 2021 we hope there will be a point when we can start to hold in-person meetings and events. We have a date booked with the Elks Lodge for our Swapfest. However, we will not make a decision if we will have the fest until January. We will have events like the FM Simplex contest. The 2021 contest will be held on February 28th. We have also been asked to run a special event station for the 20th anniversary of 9/11.

I want to welcome Dick Strassburger N9EEE to the board. He has volunteered to fill the vacant director position left by Al KC9IJJ.

- Dave Schank, KA9WXN

TREASURER'S FINANCIAL REPORT

Treasurer's Report, as of 10/16/2020

Account Balances

Petty Cash: \$20 (Held by treasurer)

Paypal: \$269

Checking: \$5,649

CD #1: \$5,187

CD #2: \$7,635

Total all accounts: \$18,760

Notes: Our expenses are spread out across the year, but coming up in January is insurance, around \$200; the other significant expenses are the Post Office Box and Bank Fees. (these are reviewed annually) The other big expenses for the club are the food meeting and Field Day, we did not incur anything in 2020 due to cancellation. Any questions regarding the club finances can be sent to n9ux@arrl.net.

Respectfully submitted by Joe Schwarz, N9UX, MRAC Treasurer

THE VALUE OF MEMBERSHIP

When you belong to the Milwaukee Radio Amateurs' Club you draw upon the history of ham radio and help shape its future. The oldest ARRL-affiliated amateur radio club and one of a handful of the oldest ham radio clubs in the USA established in 1917, the MRAC is the bedrock for supporting local hams advancing in the hobby, fostering a unique camaraderie, and providing meaningful opportunities. These are just a few of the benefits of membership.

Field Day
Special Event Stations
Simplex Contest
FM wide coverage Repeater
System Fusion node (local and WIRES-X)
Technician and General Class License training
Elmers
Auction
Winter Potluck
Summer Picnic
Net control training
Monthly meetings
Club nets
Specialty projects, such as ARISS
Project workshops

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

The Annual Membership Renewal is underway with a membership form arriving in your mailbox soon. You may also renew online [HERE](#) and reply by mail. If you prefer a printed form, click [HERE](#). Don't delay...you won't want to miss your value in membership.

MEMBERSHIP REFERRAL

Do you know another ham that would benefit from membership in the MRAC? Invite them to become a member and receive a \$5 credit toward your next year's membership fee. They must note your call sign as a referral on the application form. This is intended for new hams or OMs who haven't been an active member in the club for at least 5 years. Offer limited to 4 referrals per person/family membership per year. Help us grow our club.

MEMBERSHIP SURVEY

Amateur Radio is a fast moving hobby with new technologies, new operating styles, and old ideas made new. By taking our survey, you're helping us plan programming for future meetings, and develop new activities. Please take the survey by clicking [HERE](#).

MEMBER NEWS

New Member (July): W9DJD, Dan Deibert

New Lifetime Members: AB9CD, Mark Tellier, and K9LQ Alfred Huwald

Silent Keys (2020):

Mark Borski K9MEB (KB9VJN) (2001)

Willian Fullhart W9WCF (1954, 1978)

Robert Goldstein K9KJT (1959)

Bob Immekus W9CYI (1948, 1998)

Al Maahs KC9IJJ (2006)

James O. Zabel W9KNZ (1971)

* denotes year of membership initiation

ACTIVITIES and PROJECTS



WINTER 2020 SIMPLEX CONTEST RESULTS

This year's contest was held on Sunday, February 9th. It was a snowy day for our rover stations this year. We thank them for putting in the effort and giving out the scores. There were 26 stations that operated the contest with 8 of them being out west towards Madison. Of the 26 stations, only 10 stations submitted logs and one was late. The last 30 minutes were set aside for the digital mode Fusion and DSTAR. Only one log was submitted with 6 digital contacts.

The winning club this year was the Milwaukee Radio Amateurs' Club. The second place goes to Badger contesters and Third Place goes to Westside Radio Club.

Congratulations to the winners in each category.

To see more results in the various categories, click [HERE](#).

The 2021 FM Simplex Contest will be held on February 28th. We would love to get more activity from around the state for 2021. Please help us promote the

event and get more stations on the air.

WINTER 2021 SIMPLEX CONTEST

To promote FM and digital voice mode communications and VHF/UHF contesting while giving new hams an opportunity to develop their contesting skills. See the rules [HERE](#).

Sunday, February 28, 2021

144 MHz (1:00 pm - 2:00 pm)

446 MHz (2:00 pm - 2:30 pm)

52 MHz (2:30 pm - 3:00 pm)

224 Mhz (3:00 - 3:30 pm)

Digital (2m or 70cm) (3:30 pm - 4:00 pm)

2020 FIELD DAY

Field Day 2020 took a sharp hairpin turn when COVID-19 moved into town. Most clubs retreated from organized team activities. With the ARRL amending its rules for this year, clubs could still participate through the individual efforts of its club members.

We are preparing a Field Day Wrap-up report of our individual club members who submitted logs to the ARRL. KA9WXN, WB9BWP, NX1T, and K9FI will share their stories and pictures in an upcoming newsletter. If we missed recognizing you, please let me know and submit your story and pictures. The ARRL results will also be published at that time.

9/11 SPECIAL EVENT STATION

We have been invited to run a special event station at the 2021 MATC Police and Fire Expo at the Oak Creek campus. This is the same location where MRAC and MAARS operate Field Day. 2021 Marks the 20th anniversary of 9/11. We are currently in the planning stages for this event. If you are interested in being involved please contact Dave KA9WXN.

SYSTEM FUSION OPERATION

The MRAC's implementation of Yaesu's System Fusion is the combination of the DR-2X repeater and a HRI-200 WIRES-X modem. (Note: the repeater operates in analog and digital mode determined by the incoming signal).

The C4FM Fusion net on Saturday evenings at 7:00 pm Central Time is the longest running net, according to Fusion guru K9EQ who operates the MNWIS room, reflector, and Monday evening global Fusion net. Launched on March 16, 2014, this past Saturday (10/31) was the 332nd continuously hosted net. Leroy, WD9HOT and Bob, KC9YRR have been the stalwarts keeping the digital voice mode active on the W9RH repeater.

The inclusion of WIRES-X has opened communication beyond the Milwaukee area. However when engaged, WIRES-X can usurp or distract from local communications if vigilance is neglected by the last user. (Please remember to disengage WIRES-X after your QSO...tnx!)

Net: Saturdays, 7:00 pm / W9RH repeater / Digital Narrow mode

ARISS Update

ARISS (Amateur Radio on the International Space Station, ariss.org) is a project between the MRAC, local area schools and NASA designed to put students in area schools in contact with an astronaut on the space station. With an approved application, students are able to speak directly with an astronaut. The radio communication equipment and engineering personnel is provided by MRAC. About 30 students can participate. Students each get about 15 seconds to ask a question, and this happens live as the ISS passes over our area, a window of about 10-15 minutes at best.

A successful contact can be made easily on 2 meters with a handheld radio, a directional antenna, and 5 watts of power. However to ensure contact is clear and continuously maintained during the duration of the ISS' travel across our sky, more robust equipment is required by NASA. We use a computer to control the direction of the antennas to track the ISS, a 100 watt radio on 2 meters, and backup power sources. NASA also requires an entirely separate backup station with its own power and antenna in case of a failure. About 10 members of MRAC have been designing and building a portable station over the last 2 years. It has been engineered for quick assembly and disassembly as we take it from school to school for various events. Our group had an opportunity recently to listen to a school contact so we could test our equipment during one of our Saturday meetings. The tracking software and the radio performed marvelously. A video of the test can be viewed on the MRAC ARISS page (w9rh.org/ariss-project).

The club is currently working on the antenna system. Shortly after the video was filmed, the rig was taken out to field day for testing and we learned the 2M antenna could not transmit. Upon closer inspection, we determined the circuit board was not salvageable and a replica was created with the help of a relatively new ham, Chris Hemmerly (KD9LMR). The design was matched almost exactly the same as the original circuit board, with a few minor improvements. The club has yet to install it on the antenna and test it. Coronavirus has temporarily caused us to suspend in-person meetings so no physical work on the radio station has happened since April when the circuit board was initially produced. The club is monitoring the situation with Coronavirus and as soon as it is safe to resume in-person meetings, we will continue working on the radio station.

The next phase of our project involves reassembling the antenna and testing our ability to transmit signals to satellites. We also need to connect with schools and begin to submit applications together. The application is about 25 pages and the entire process from start to approved air date is about 18 months. If you or someone you know is interested in more information or would like to participate, please visit the website or reach out to Roger Heindl (AC9BT), 414-

688-1680 cell. Roger is the community outreach coordinator for the MRAC ARISS group.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES

MRAC BOD Meeting Notes - 10/5/2020

Dave requested discussion regarding the inclusion of a formal meeting topic for the next club meeting. Dick suggested a Show and Tell - "show us your ham shack" - as a means for members to share, as well as learn how to upload and present on zoom. The Board concurred. Joe will put this in the next member communication email .

MEETING DATES

Membership meeting dates were adjusted to accommodate the holiday calendar.

November meeting, now on November 19

December meeting, now on December 17

SWAPFEST

Hamfests in the area are still being cancelled due to the pandemic and state laws prohibiting large crowds. The Elks Lodge is limiting capacity to 40 people as of this writing. The Board will continue to monitor the progress of virus containment and make a final determination of the March Swapfest at the December meeting. There may be an alternate consideration for an indoor/outdoor event in warmer months. Stan will contact someone who attended Racine Hamfest to gain feedback of that event. The facility has already been paid and credit will be made available towards the next event.

Dick suggested we add a Swapfest page to the club's web site to acknowledge the potential for the event and provide status updates as we near the event determination.

SYSTEM FUSION

Dick offered to share the PowerPoint slides he developed to facilitate a presentation on Fusion for the West Side Radio Club should MRAC find this of value for a future presentaton.

It was noted in Dick's research that Wires-X and Reflectors are separate digital platforms that both facilitate digital voice communications and can coexist including when connected to the same repeater. (America's Link, MNWIS are two examples).

Dave noted the possibility of the club adding a UHF repeater dedicated to Fusion, including WIRES-X and Reflector. There would be no additional cost to the club to add the repeater.

ADMINISTRATIVE NOTE

Secretaries note in response to a question: Yes, Dale is still our secretary even though he didn't make the board meeting.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL DISCUSSION

Discussed a postal mailing to members, in addition to email, to gain attention and assure receipt of the annual renewal notice.

Discussed adding a member referral program to grow membership. \$10 per referral of new members only. (Edit: this was amended to \$5 per referral, maximum of 4 referrals per year. See member renewal application for more details).

Currently have 5 family memberships and 27 individual memberships

Dick suggested reprise of the club newsletter to establish value for club membership. Depending on the amount of information available, will determine if its a newsletter or a sell sheet. Dick offered to compile and write the newsletter, but not to do so indefinitely. Dick volunteered to put the framework together if someone would help with content. Joe can help here in early November. It will be presented and finalized at the next board meeting.

Possible contents discussed: Financials, board members, benefits of membership, meetings info and logistics, message from the president, innovations the club has achieved, ARISS project status.

SPECIAL EVENT STATION

Discussed the potential for a special event station to support the 911 EMS/Police Expo at MATC in Oak Creek if MATCs guidelines for the pandemic allow it. Alternatively, we would seek another special event purpose. W9RH club call will be used.

MISCELLANEOUS

Dave to get history discs to Dick.
Joe to put Financials on website
Dale to get meeting notes on the web sites
Joe, move financials to BOD GDrive
Dave or Joe to fix PayPal link in membership form
Dick volunteered to help clean up the web site

OFFICERS and DIRECTORS

Officers

President: Dave Schank, KA9WXN
Vice President: (vacant)
Secretary: Dale Webler, AB9DW
Treasurer: Joe Schwarz, N9UX

Directors

Stan Siehndel, KD9AUY
Barry Sprifke, W9BLS
Dick Strassburger, N9EEE
Dean Berglund, KC9REN
Tom Pachner, W9TJP

Trustee

Dave De Febo, WB9BWP

Meetings and Nets

NOTICE: At present, no in-person meetings or activities have been planned due to guidelines restricting group size and social distancing due to the current pandemic.

MEETINGS

...are held the third Thursday of every month, except when holidays conflict. During the pandemic, we are offering a hybrid of a formal meeting and check-in at 7:00 pm on the club repeater, followed at 8:00 pm via zoom with a social program and occasional formal presentation.

Meeting Dates:

November 19, 2020 (program: SSTV with ISS)
December 17, 2020 (program: More on System Fusion)

NETS

FM 2m Repeater: Fridays, 9:00 pm CT
10m SSB 28.490 MHz: Fridays, 8:00 pm CT
Fusion 2m Repeater: Saturdays, 7:00 pm CT
Fusion 2m Repeater: MNWIS Mondays, 7:00 pm CT

REPEATER

145.390 MHz, -600 kHz, CTCSS 127.3 Hz

FM and C4FM (Fusion) modes - Auto Mode Select

WIRES-X connected: Node ID: 33588 Room ID:43588

For more information about our repeater system, click [HERE](#).

EXTRA STUFF

YAHOO GROUPS TERMINATION

Yahoo! is terminating their platform effective December 15, 2020. The Board of Directors has migrated to another platform. Nothing of consequence will be lost in this transition. We suspect you won't miss this feature since we have a robust Facebook page, informational web site, and frequent nets and meetings for members' voices to be heard. As always, if you have an immediate concern, please contact us via email.

CONTACT INFORMATION

EMAIL: w9rh@arrl.net

WEBSITE: W9RH.org

FACEBOOK: facebook.com/MRAC.W9RH



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