



Radio Waves

The Great Lakes Division Mid-Month Report September

From the Michigan Section Manager

Larry Camp, WB8R

Greetings from Michigan to all who read this,

It appears that our weather is beginning to match the calendar here in Michigan as you can see the beginnings of fall in the foliage, the reduced hours of daylight and the increased hours of darkness, and of course the temperatures.

Here in the extreme-southern portion of the state (about a dozen miles from 9-land (Indiana)), frost has not yet happened, but it is certainly imminent. I am not a huge fan of winter and choose to endure rather than take the steps to solve that problem. Hamfests are back in fashion now that the summer heat is pretty well gone and after the first frosts, the flying nuisances will also be gone, making for some very pleasant browsing for bargains.

Here are the hamfests that are currently on the schedule for Michigan for mid-September through the end of the year. ARRL MI official planning to attend is in parentheses.

Sep 13	GMARC Trunk Swap, Shelby Twp, MI
Sep 13	OAARS Hamfest, West Branch, MI
Sep 14	Adrian Hamfest, Adrian, MI (WB8R)
Sep 20	Top of MI ARC/Thunder Bay ARC Hamfest, Gaylord, MI (WB8R)
Oct 4	Kalamazoo Hamfest & Vintage Radio Show, Kalamazoo, MI (WB8R)
Oct 4	Copper Country Hamfest, Baraga, MI
Oct 10	Muskegon Color Tour Hamfest, Muskegon, MI (WB8R)
Oct 19	USECA Swap St. Clair Shores, MI (TBD)



Dec 7 LCARC Swap, Troy, MI (WB8R)

If you also attend any (or all) of the hamfests that I am at, please stop by the table and say hello.

That is it for this month.

Have fun, and be Radioactive!

73,
Larry, WB8R
Michigan ARRL Section Manager
517-617-4883
wb8r@arrl.org

From the Ohio Section Manager

Tom Sly, WB8LCD

The latest edition of the Ohio Section Journal is now online and ready for you to read! There's an awful lot of Ham Radio activities going on in the Ohio Section, so get off the chair or couch you're sitting on and get out there, get involved, and get on the air!

The links below will take you directly to the newsletter. Both are also available directly from the Ohio Section Web-site (www.arrl-ohio.org) where you will also find the downloadable PDF of the Ohio Governor's proclamation for Field Day. You'll want to print it out and display it at your Field Day site.

Since the ARRL email reflector is not yet working, please forward this announcement everywhere!

https://arrl-ohio.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/OSJ_September-2025.pdf

Tom...
wb8lcd@arrl.org



New Survey – Age or Term Limits for ARRL Board Members...

There is a new survey posted on the Great Lakes Division website and waiting for YOUR input on this really important question. I really want to hear your honest feedback on this topic.

Here's a link to it...

GLD Survey

Please take just a couple of minutes of your time and take the survey.

Got a question that you think should be asked? Let me know... n8sy@n8sy.com

Do you know someone who is not getting this newsletter

Hi Gang,

If you know someone who isn't already getting Radio Waves, have them sign up to receive it!! They don't have to be ARRL members to sign up, just click on the button below and in no time, they will start receiving it.

Sign up for Radio Waves

Scott's Stuff

Hi Gang,

Wow... Welcome to September!

Can we just take a moment to collectively exhale? August, you were... *something else*. When I last typed out my musings, I genuinely believed I understood the meaning of "hot." I'd weathered a few oppressive days, maybe even a week of wilting temperatures. But August? August decided to redefine "scorcher."



It was less a heatwave and more a prolonged, personal vendetta waged by the sun against all living things that dared to exist outside of industrial-grade refrigeration. I sincerely hope your personal sanctuaries, be they air-conditioned basements, strategically placed ice packs, or even the fleeting coolness of a public library, provided you with much-needed respite. My own thermostat seemed to be having a nervous breakdown, oscillating wildly between "arctic blast" and "surface of the sun" with alarming regularity. I'm pretty sure I saw a squirrel fanning itself with a palm frond last week.

Between the relentless summer heat and the nonstop chatter on the ham radio grapevine, this season has truly been a whirlwind. My recent travels have taken me to some outstanding gatherings, each buzzing with energy and enthusiasm for our hobby. One event that stood out was the Greater Louisville Hamfest in Kentucky. The atmosphere was electric—blinking lights everywhere, the familiar scent of soldering in the air, and animated conversations about antenna theory filling the room.

However, the real highlight for me was the honor of presenting the Findlay Radio Club with a plaque celebrating an extraordinary achievement: over 100 years as an ARRL Affiliated Club. That's a century of dedication and passion, a milestone that predates even sliced bread and my grandmother's legendary biscuit recipe. Their commitment to amateur radio and their community is inspiring, and I suspect their knack for finding shade at outdoor events has served them well throughout the decades. Congratulations to the Findlay Radio Club on this remarkable accomplishment!

Fresh off the Kentucky humidity, I found myself in Newington, assisting with the training of the newest batch of Section Managers. Now, if you haven't had the pleasure, imagine a mix between a slightly bewildered but eager puppy and a seasoned marathon runner, all rolled into one.

These individuals are stepping into vital roles, and it's been my absolute privilege over the years to offer them a gentle nudge (or sometimes, a full-blown shove) in the right direction. We delve into the nitty-gritty – the responsibilities, the best ways to navigate the often-labyrinthine world of amateur radio administration, and, most importantly, how to inject a healthy dose of enjoyment into what can sometimes feel like a demanding job.

Seeing their enthusiasm blossom and watching them gain confidence is incredibly rewarding. It reminds me why we all got into this fantastic hobby in the first place: community, learning, and a whole lot of fun.

Speaking of community and learning, have you, my esteemed readers, cast your eyeballs over the latest survey that's been posted on the Great Lakes Division website? If you haven't, please, I implore you, find a quiet corner, brew yourself a calming cup of tea (or something stronger, no judgment here), and dedicate a few precious moments to it. This isn't just a formality; it's a genuine plea for your honest, unfiltered opinions.

What do you think? I truly want to understand your perspective on this topic. Consider it a virtual handshake, a digital nod of mutual respect.

And while we're on the topic of connections, I've had a number of requests from clubs wanting to be featured on our "Links" club page. It's fantastic to see so many active organizations out there! If your club isn't currently listed, and you're thinking, "Hey, we do cool stuff! We have meetings and picnics and possibly even bake-offs!" then please, do yourself and your fellow members a favor and send me your URL. My inbox is practically begging for more clickable adventures. You can reach me at n8sy@n8sy.com. Let's get your club the visibility it deserves.

That's about all the rambling I can manage for this installment. The air is starting to feel a little crisper, the leaves are contemplating their dramatic autumnal exits, and the radio waves are still buzzing with the hum of camaraderie. I hope to catch you on the airwaves, perhaps at a lively club meeting, or even amidst the organized chaos of a hamfest. Until then, stay cool (literally and figuratively) and keep those signals strong!

That's going to do it from here this time around. Catch you on the air, in a club meeting, or at a hamfest! Until then, **Be Radio Active!!!!**

73,

Scott, N8SY
Great Lakes Division Director
n8sy@arrl.org

The Beep Boop Paradox: Or, How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Dots and Dashes

You know, it's funny how life works. Some things just have a way of coming full circle, don't they? Like disco pants making a comeback (please, no), or my sudden, inexplicable craving for artisanal sourdough after years of white bread devotion. But nothing – and I mean *nothing* – quite tickles my funny bone like the current resurgence of interest in Morse Code among a particular demographic of ham radio operators.

Oh, the irony! It's thicker than a lead brick in a feather pillow.

Let me take you back a bit. Picture it: the late 90s, early 2000s. The airwaves were buzzing, but a certain segment of the amateur radio world was... well, let's just say they had a *gripe*. That gripe was Morse Code. Or, as we affectionately called it – or sometimes, less affectionately, cursed it – CW (Continuous Wave). For decades, passing a CW proficiency test was as much a part of getting your Novice, General, Advanced or Extra class license as understanding Ohm's Law. It was the gatekeeper, the sacred cow, the thing that separated the wheat from the chaff, or at least, the hams who could count dits and dahs from those who couldn't.

I remember the struggle. Hours spent with a code practice oscillator and code tapes, the maddening similarity between a "K" and an "R," the sheer terror of that dreaded 20 WPM exam for my Extra License. My brain felt like a tangled mess of electrical wires, sparking with short-circuits every time the guy on the tape sped up. It was a rite of passage, a badge of honor once conquered. And for many of us, it was also the greatest achievement thus far in ham radio, that one part of the test that you just couldn't take a wild guess on. You either got it, or you didn't.

The blinking cursor mocked me. A blank document on a Tuesday morning, a cruel joke considering the seismic shift that had just occurred in my meticulously planned future. The FCC, that esteemed body of regulators whose decisions I usually only encountered when my Wi-Fi decided to take a sabbatical, had dropped a bombshell. They'd abolished the Morse code requirement for amateur radio licenses.

My initial reaction wasn't elation, or even relief. It was a profound, soul-crushing whelm of... disappointment. Yes, disappointment. I'd spent months, nay, years, diligently torturing my auditory nerves with the hypnotic drone of Jean Shephard, K2ORS. His voice, a balm on the frayed edges of my sanity during those late-night practice sessions, was now, in hindsight, more of a gentle saboteur. "Keep going, we're almost there," he'd murmur, while my brain felt like it was being put through a cosmic shredder, spitting out "QSL" instead of my own name.

My ham shack, once a veritable telegraphers' academy, was now a shrine to a bygone era. Piles of meticulously transcribed character sheets, each smudge a testament to my dedication, now felt like ancient hieroglyphs, their meaning lost to the sands of time and technological progress. I could practically see the dust gathering on my perfectly honed ear for the subtle nuances of a dah-dit-dit-dah, a skill that had, until this very moment, felt as vital as breathing.

I'd envisioned myself, license in hand, hunched over my rig, tapping out my credentials with the practiced ease of a seasoned operator. I'd pictured the thrill of reaching out across the ether, a cryptic string of dots and dashes a secret handshake with fellow travelers of the radio waves. Now, those dreams felt as relevant as a carrier pigeon service in the age of fiber optics.

My friends, who'd endured my nightly lamentations about missed characters and the sheer existential dread of memorizing the Q-code, were either bewildered or – and this is the truly galling part – happy. "Great!" they'd exclaim, oblivious to the years of character-building (literally) I'd just undergone. "Now you can just get your license!"

Just get my license? This wasn't about just getting a license. This was about the journey, the struggle, the sheer, stubborn refusal to be defeated by a string of rhythmic beeps. It was about the quiet satisfaction of understanding a language most people had long forgotten. Now, it was like climbing Mount Everest only to discover they'd installed an elevator at the summit.

So here I sit, the architect of my own unnecessary struggle, staring at this blank page. The world of amateur radio has moved on, embracing the future. And I? I'm left with a perfectly trained ear for static and an unshakeable belief that sometimes, the most rewarding journeys are the ones where you're forced to decipher the actual code. Oh, the humanity.

Hallelujah! The angels sang! The old guard groaned (some quietly, some very, very loudly, often on 75 meters). But the new generation? They rejoiced! Finally, a pathway into the higher echelons of amateur radio without having to decipher a language that sounded like a robot having a seizure. Thousands, perhaps tens of thousands, flocked to get their General and Extra licenses. The airwaves opened up, new digital modes like DMR and Fusion started to proliferate, and the future, it seemed, was firmly rooted in IP systems, Wi-Fi, and sophisticated satellite communications like Starlink, Viasat, and even the promise of AST SpaceMobile. The era of the beep-boop was officially... over. Or so we thought.

Fast forward to today. After years of enjoying their HF privileges without a single dot or dash, after diving deep into the complexities of Winlink, configuring their remote stations, experimenting with SDR, and even dabbling with Push to Talk over Cellular (PoC) services akin to the old Nextel but on steroids, something peculiar is happening. I'm seeing it on forums, hearing it on repeaters, and even getting emails about it: folks who snagged their licenses post-CW requirement are now asking, with a surprising amount of genuine curiosity, "So, how do I learn Morse Code?"

My friends, I have to confess, a tiny, mischievous part of me cracks a smile every time I hear this. It's like watching someone spend years meticulously avoiding Brussels sprouts, only to spontaneously declare them their new favorite vegetable. What gives?

Well, I think there are a few things at play here.

Firstly, there's the undeniable "cool factor." In a world saturated with apps like Echolink, Zello, talk2me, and even enabling Push to Talk on Discord for quick chats, there's something inherently retro-futuristic about CW. It's like a secret handshake, a subtle nod to the origins of radio itself. It's the first digital mode, after all, predating everything from PSK31 to FT8 by a century. It's elegant in its simplicity.

Secondly, and perhaps more profoundly, there's the sheer, undeniable efficiency and resilience of CW. We live in an age where our communications are increasingly reliant on complex infrastructure. Cell towers, fiber optic cables, massive data centers – they're all fantastic until disaster strikes. And let's be honest, disasters *are* local. Whether it's floods, tornados, wildfires, or even a widespread power grid failure, suddenly all those fancy push to talk cell phones, push to talk Wi-Fi radios, and Wi-Fi telephones become about as useful as a chocolate teapot. T-Mobile's satellite internet service might offer some resilience, and dedicated satellite phones and services from SpaceX can keep some links open, but even those can be overwhelmed or have limitations.

This is where the ham radio community truly shines, and where the value of something as basic as CW becomes startlingly clear. When first responders are coordinating, when ARRL ARES, the Red Cross, the Salvation Army, and SATERN are mobilizing, when served government agencies and non-government served agencies need eyes and ears on the ground for damage assessment, reliable communications are paramount. They need communicators, intake specialists, and extra hands.

Imagine a scenario: a major hurricane has just ripped through your area. The cell infrastructure is gone. The internet is down. Your Starlink dish is a very expensive bird bath. Even the local MARCS radio system for law enforcement is struggling with repeater outages. Your sophisticated DMR and Fusion radios are sitting silent because the repeaters are off-air. You've got your portable power setup, but every watt counts.

What's the one thing that can often still punch through the static, requiring minimal power and the simplest of equipment? Yep, good old CW. It's about getting out communications from the affected area, ensuring efficiency and accuracy when every second counts. It's the ultimate hardening of systems. While understanding IP systems and troubleshooting IP issues is crucial for many modern applications, sometimes you just need to get a message out on RF versus wired connections, and CW does it with unparalleled grace under pressure. It's the ultimate backup internet connection: none!

So, these newer hams, who initially bypassed the dots and dashes, are now seeing the light. They're realizing that while modern advancements are incredible, there's a timeless wisdom in simplicity. They're discovering that learning Morse Code isn't just about passing a test; it's about connecting with history, mastering a fundamental skill, and equipping themselves with an incredibly robust method of communication for when everything else goes dark.

It's almost like they're saying, "You know what? This 'ancient' stuff? It actually works. And it's pretty darn cool." And to that, I, a proud, slightly battered veteran of the 20 WPM exam, can only offer a knowing nod.

So, if you're one of those folks who got your license without ever touching a straight key, and now find yourself intrigued, I say go for it! Dive into the world of dits and dahs. You might just find it's one of the most rewarding parts of your ham radio journey. And who knows, you might even find yourself enjoying it more than that artisanal sourdough. (Okay, maybe not *that* much, but close!)

73 and be “radio active my friends!!”

2025 Great Lakes Division Hamfests

Here in the Great Lakes Division, we have over 50 hamfests a year.

So, if you haven't started planning your hamfest schedule yet, you really need to start now.

Please post this listing in your club's newsletter and announce the swaps on your local nets. Talk them up.

Let's fully support all of our hamfests in every way possible. It means success for everyone. Be sure to invite your ARRL Officials as soon as your date is set.

If you are planning on having your hamfest listed in QST please be sure to start your planning well in advance of your Hamfest date, as this allows adequate time for QST Listings. QST announcements require a 3-month lead time.

To be fair to our division's clubs, the Great Lakes Division policy **now has 2 requirements**. **Any club requesting ARRL sanctioning within the Great Lakes Division must now be an ARRL Affiliated Club with a maximum of two hamfests/swaps in any given calendar year, and they must be at least four months apart.**



09/20/2025 - Top of Michigan Amateur Radio Club & Thunder Bay Amateur Radio Club	09/27/2025 - Paintsville KY4ARC Hamfest
Location: Gaylord, MI	Location: Paintsville, KY
Sponsor: Top of Michigan ARC Gaylord and Thunder Bay ARC Alpena	Sponsor: KY4ARC
Website: http://www.nm8rc.org	Website: http://ky4arc.com
Learn More	Learn More

09/28/2025 - Cleveland Hamfest Location: Berea, OH Sponsor: Hamfest Association of Cleveland Website: https://www.hac.org Learn More	10/04/2025 - 2025 Kalamazoo Hamfest and Vintage Electronic Expo Location: Kalamazoo, MI Sponsor: Kalamazoo Amateur Radio Club, Southwest Michigan Amateur Radio Team, Vintage Electronics Expo Website: http://www.kalamazoohamfest.org/ Learn More
10/04/2025 - Copper Country Hamfest Location: Baraga, MI Sponsor: KCRA CCRAA BCRA Website: https://kcra-mi.net/ Learn More	10/04/2025 - DX Workshop Location: Bowling Green , KY Sponsor: Western Kentucky DX Association Website: http://www.wkdx.org/events Learn More
10/04/2025 - Northwest Ohio Amateur Radio Club (NWOARC) Hamfest Location: Lima, OH Sponsor: Northwest Ohio Amateur Radio Club Website: http://www.nwoarc.com Learn More	10/06/2025 - 10/10/2025 FMCA-Amateur Radio Chapter Rally Location: Paducha, KY Sponsor: Family RV Association Website: http://frvaarc.com Learn More
10/11/2025 - Muskegon Color Tour Hamfest Location: Muskegon, MI Sponsor: Muskegon County Emergency Communication Services, Inc. Website: http://mcecs.net/Hamfest.htm Learn More	10/11/2025 - Williams County ARA Hamfest Location: Montpelier, OH Sponsor: Williams County ARA Learn More
10/12/2025 - Ashland Trunkfest Location: Ashland, OH Sponsor: Ashland Area Amateur Radio Club Learn More	10/19/2025 - U.S.E.C.A. (Utica Shelby Emergency Communication Association) Hamfest Location: St. Clair Shores, MI Sponsor: U.S.E.C.A. (Utica Shelby Emergency Communication Association) Website: http://usecaarc.org Learn More

10/25/2025 - [Hazard Hamfest](#)

Location: Hazard, KY

Sponsor: Kentucky Mountains Amateur
Radio Club

[Learn More](#)

You can always find the latest information about upcoming hamfests on the Great Lakes Division website.

Great Lakes Division Hamfests

Just click to get the latest hamfest updates.

STOP – Right there!!!
We've come to the end...



Be Radio-Active --- See Ya' Soon!

Radio Waves is produced as a look inside of the Great Lakes Division and all that it has to offer. It is our sincerest hope that you have enjoyed this edition and will encourage your friends to be a part of the ARRL and receive the latest news and information about the ARRL and the Great Lakes Division!