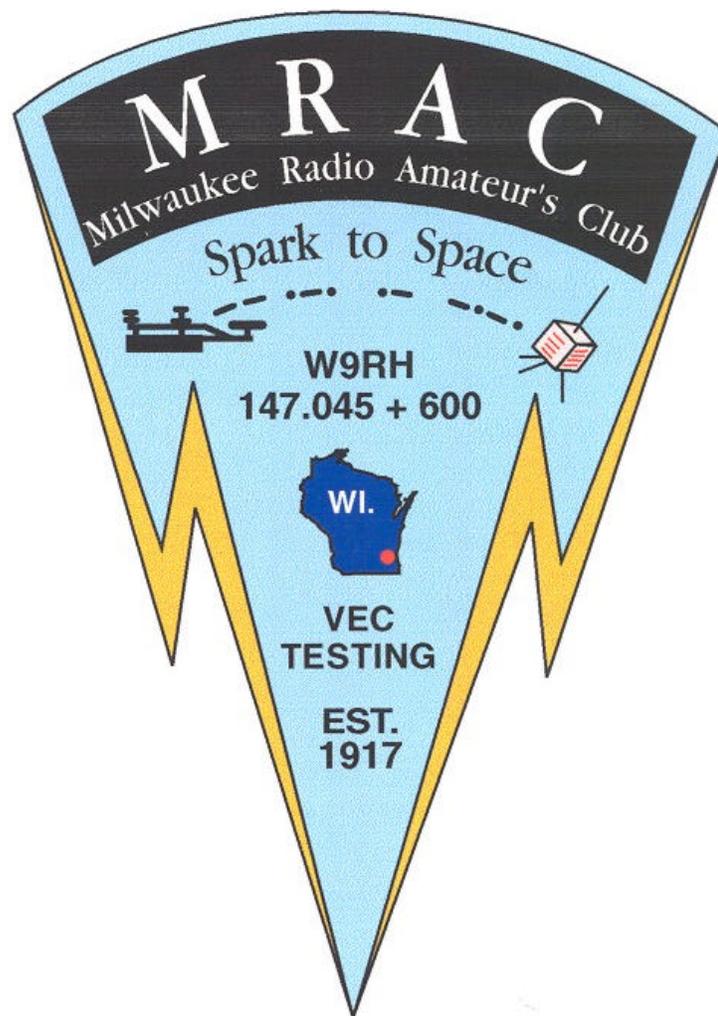


The History of The Milwaukee Radio Amateurs' Club Inc. "MRAC"



Part 1: 1917 - 2001

The Milwaukee Radio Amateurs' Club has a long and storied history. There has not been any formal effort to document some of the milestones of our existence. Until now... So let's travel through the years and see the highlights of MRAC and of world news.

- 1912** Congress passes the Radio Act of 1912, licensing amateur radio operators and restricting them to 200 meters.
- 1914** The American Radio Relay League was formed.
- 1917** January—The Milwaukee Radio Amateurs' Club was formed by L.S. Hillegas Baird, 9HO, and three others. The first meetings were held at the Trustee's Room of the Milwaukee Public Museum.
The U.S. declared war on Germany.
Congress passed the Espionage Act, providing a \$10,000 fine and 20 years in prison for anyone who encouraged disloyalty or interfered with the draft.
U.S. purchases the Virgin Islands from Denmark.
- 1918** March 13 was the start of daylight savings time.
October—the Influenza Epidemic strikes 1/4th of all U.S. citizens. War assembly plants were shut down and panic spread from coast to coast.
- 1919** MRAC became affiliated with the ARRL.
Ban on amateur radio because of World War I was lifted.
Hiram Percy Maxim, founder of the ARRL, made the first major push to affiliate radio clubs across the country.
Ratification of the 18th amendment to the constitution on prohibition outlawing liquor created turmoil.
- 1920** Tucson, Arizona inaugurates the first municipal airport in the country.
- 1921** First ARRL National Convention is held in Chicago.
Professor Albert Einstein introduced "Time" as the fourth dimension to his theory of relativity.
- 1922** MRAC starts its first code and radio building classes. Elementary electricity and radio was taught.
MRAC members are using spark transmitters.
The Lincoln Memorial was dedicated in Washington D.C.
Daily broadcasting of music and news was scheduled in New York City. Crystal headphone receiving sets were selling rapidly.
- 1923** Department of Justice officials asked all amateurs to voluntarily change from spark to CW transmissions. (The Dept. of Justice had charge of radio before the creation of the FCC).
Time magazine was founded.
The first Schick electric shaver was sold.

- 1924** The Milwaukee Journal started a column in their newspaper called "HamChatter". Amateurs using phone transmissions were warned to stop or they would lose their license, only CW was legal.
MRAC has CW classes and radio theory once a week.
The " W " prefix was added to all amateur calls, both new and existing.
- 1925** MRAC starts its own news letter called the Badger ARRL News.
- 1926** MRAC has members in all 48 states due to the popularity of the " Badger ARRL Newsletter." The newsletter contained diagrams on crystal oscillators and other up to date radio circuits that could be built. General Billy Mitchell begins to establish a modern military air power.
Henry Ford starts offering his cars in other colors besides black. He also introduces the 8-hour work day and 5 day work week to the auto industry.
NBC organizes the first nation wide radio broadcast network.
- 1927** MRAC organizes two baseball teams, the team were, " Key-Klickers and Brass Pounders ".
President Coolidge appoints five people to a new Federal Radio Control Commission.
The first iron lung is used.
Lindberg reaches Paris in 33 hours and 29 minutes. The first talking motion picture is produced and TV's first successful transmission is made.
- 1928** MRAC installs a club station at the Coast Guard Station at McKinley Beach.
MRAC also sponsors the first ARRL Central Division Convention at the Milwaukee Republican Hotel, May 25 through 27.
The Radio Commission starts testing for " Amateur First Grade " licenses.
Commander Byrd Expedition is in progress to the South Pole. Byrd had amateur radio equipment along.
Walt Disney releases the first Mickey Mouse cartoon called " Plane Crazy " and also the first cartoon with sound.
- 1929** MRAC buys code practice equipment to teach large classes.
Al Capone's infamous St. Valentines Day Massacre.
The U.S. Stock Market crashes.
- 1930** MRAC continues with annual picnics, and code and theory classes.
ARRL starts the contest Field Day. MRAC participates in the very first.
ARRL Official Observer Stations were established to watch for Hams operating outside the bands.
The Chicago Northwestern Railway asked for a list of club members who could be called if they had an emergency. Seven MRAC members volunteered.
Albert Einstein arrives in the U.S. from Germany.
The existence of the planet Pluto is confirmed.
- 1931** MRAC members start building 5 meter equipment, 56 Mc.
The Milwaukee Journal ends " HamChatter " in the newspaper. However, they granted us time to broadcast information over WTMJ radio.
Herbert Hoover signed an Act making " The Star-Spangled Banner " the national anthem.
Thomas Edison dies.

- 1932** MRAC begins using motion pictures for training and entertainment at meetings.
The first Polaroid camera is invented.
Franklin Roosevelt is elected president, he pledged the " New Deal " for all Americans.
- 1933** Many members attend the " Chicago Worlds Fair " for radio demonstrations.
The U. S. Government offered training programs in radio and other fields in an effort to get people to sign up for the " Army or Navy Volunteer Reserve ".
Prohibition is repealed.
Hitler is appointed Chancellor of Germany.
- 1934** Union's in the U.S. gain great power.
- 1935** MRAC's founder gets tuberculosis and is confined to a sanatorium.
Bootleg 5 meter stations become a problem.
Congress enacts Social Security.
- 1936** FDR is elected for a second term.
The Olympics are held in Germany. Hitler expected the games to be a show place to prove the superiority of the Nazi system.
The Olympics featured the first television broadcast.
- 1937** Howard Hughes established a transcontinental flight record.
The Golden Gate Bridge is dedicated in San Francisco.
Amelia Earhart makes her last flight.
- 1938** Nazi Germany takes over Czechoslovakia.
Walt Disney's " Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs " is the top money making movie of the year.
- 1939** MRAC sets up a booth at the Wisconsin Hobby Exposition at the Auditorium.
The club also starts having a raffle to raise money.
FDR is the first President on TV over the NBC experimental channel.
Scientist split the atom.
Germany invades Poland.
- 1940** MRAC sponsors the ARRL Wisconsin Convention at the Schroeder Hotel.
Dr. Vladimir Zivorkin demonstrates the first electron microscope.
Woman's first Nylon stockings go on sale.
U.S. cipher experts use a technique they called "Magic" to break the Japanese secret diplomatic code.
FDR is elected for his third term.
The first helicopters are flying.
- 1941** The ARRL is flooded with requests from the government for technical men needed on National Defense projects. Special registration blanks were included in the December QST. The government was looking for specialist with radio experience to replace civilian workers that have been called into the service or to a defense post.
December 7—the Japanese attack Pearl Harbor.
December 8—MRAC worked with the Mayors office to set up a state wide and local defense program.

The Red Cross suggested that club members form a group to take First Aid instructions A.S.A.P.

Rubber tires are the first items to be rationed.

1942 MRAC members start the War Emergency Radio Service in Milwaukee. Stations required a special license to operate on 2 1/2 meters with a maximum input power of 25 watts.

Jan. 15—All amateurs go off the air. (The military has sole use of the amateur frequencies).

February 5 - Signal Corps is looking for radio operators.

March 15—Marine Corps offered a qualified radio man a rank of Staff Sergeant and \$72 per month to join up and help.

April—Raytheon tube company is recruiting radio men for training on microwave radio defense systems. (Radar).

Col. Doolittle's Raiders bomb Tokyo.

Gasoline rationing goes into effect.

U.S. wins at Midway.

1943 MRAC buys 5 Series F war bonds. Club meetings were held every Thursday at the Public Library. Many times only 6 or 8 attended, but it kept the club active.

A new form of mold on cantaloupe is discovered that yields 10 times the amount of penicillin as previous sources.

Roosevelt and Churchill decide that "Unconditional Surrender" will be demanded from all enemies.

The IRS created the W-2 form for tax withholding.

Incendiary bombing starts a new phenomenon, the "Intense Fire Storm" warfare is born.

The 100th year anniversary of the first practical electric telegraph. A commemorative postage stamp was issued for the occasion.

The 75th anniversary of the first transcontinental railroad line.

The 125th anniversary of the first ship to cross the Atlantic under steam power.

MRAC's Erwin Kreis, Tommy Gettleman and Charlie Meyer create and send out monthly news letters to our members in the service to let them know what is going on at home.

Paperback books are introduced.

Hitler starts using the Buzz Bomb (Over 9000 were used).

The V-2 rocket began use. The first V-2 went out of control and landed in Sweden. It's remains were quickly recovered and sent to the British.

1945 Japan starts using Kamikaze pilots.

Hitler commits suicide.

The atomic bomb is dropped on Japan, the war is over.

MRAC members terminate their efforts with the War Emergency Radio Service and take their antennas down.

Amateurs can go back on the air.

Amateur license terms are extended from 3 to 5 years.

The Federal Government drops control over the sale of radio tubes.

The new FM broadcast system is relocated to 88 through 106 MC.

- 1946** Calculation by computer begins. The ENIAC computer had over 18,000 tubes. The first bank drive up window is used.
- 1947** MRAC applies for it's first club call. W9HRM, from deceased member Erwin Kries.
The first tubeless tires are introduced.
Chuck Yeager breaks the sound barrier.
- 1948** MRAC sponsors the ARRL National Convention at the Milwaukee Auditorium. MRAC gets it's first demonstration of SSB from W2KUJ of General Electric. Commander Fred Catel, W9DTK, a club member, arranges a tour of the USS Tautog submarine docked at the Broadway bridge downtown. Religion is abolished in public school classrooms.
The first solar heating system is installed.
The first 33 RPM records come out.
The Berlin Airlift starts.
- 1949** U.S. born "Tokyo Rose" gets 10 year sentence for treason.
The first woman's bikini is sold.
- 1950** The Korean war starts. China sends 850,000 to help North Korea resist our "Police Action".
- 1951** MRAC starts having two vice-presidents. 1st V.P. was Travis Baird W9VQD and the 2nd. V.P. was Ken Eggert W9MOT.
FCC creates the Novice, Technician and Extra class licenses to join the Advanced (formerly class A), General (formally Class B) and Conditional (formerly class C) licenses.
Over 3 million Koreans are dead in one year.
The "King and I" becomes a Broadway smash.
The 22nd amendment is added to the Constitution - No person can be a U.S. President for more than two terms.
- 1952** MRAC has 250 members.
MRAC provided communications for the car race at Elkhart Lake. 25 members stationed in their cars strategically parked around the 7-1/2 mile race course funneled their observations of the race's progress to the central control.
MRAC ladies auxiliary is started.
MRAC gets it's International Harvester truck for portable radio communications. The truck was distinctively marked with the clubs call, W9HRM. The truck had a matching trailer with a 2.5 KW generator in it.
December—FCC stopped issuing new Advanced class licenses and took away Advanced and Extra privileges.
The first UHF TV station goes on the air.
Denver TV station is the first to go on the air with more than 5KW of power.
- 1953** MRAC starts with a achievement award program for making contacts.
January—The first moonbounce signals heard.
- 1955** MRAC starts first TVI technical staff to help all Milwaukee amateurs that are having TVI problems.

- 1956** U.S. starts the Interstate Highway System.
- 1957** Russia launches the first satellite called Sputnik.
- 1958** 27 MHz taken away from hams and the Citizens Radio Service created.
- 1959** Amateur Electronic Supply starts demo's of new equipment at MRAC meetings. Members go on a field trip to the Hallicrafters plant.
Alaska becomes the 49th state.
Hawaii becomes the 50th state.
Castro takes over Cuba as dictator.
Americas first 7 astronauts are selected.
U.S. hams get an additional 50 Kc at top end of 20 meters.
- 1960** MRAC still runs Civil Defense Emergency drills.
July—The first moonbounce 2 way contact takes place.
The U.S. signs a treaty with Japan to defend them against future attacks. U.S. builds first bases in Japan.
President Kennedy commits the U.S. to putting a man on the moon.
U2 spy plane is shot down over Russia.
U.S. launches 1st reconnaissance satellite.
FDA approves the 1st contraceptive pills, \$10 per months supply.
The U.S. atomic sub " Triton " circumnavigates the globe in 84 days, 30,708 miles.
- 1961** December 12 - OSCAR 1, the first amateur radio satellite and the first non-government sponsored satellite is launched.
60th anniversary of Marconi's first transatlantic wireless communication between England and Newfoundland. President Kennedy creates the "Peace Corps".
Russia puts the first man into space.
Congress passes a bill making it a Federal crime to hijack a airplane or ship.
The Berlin wall is built.
The 1st U.S. military companies arrive in South Vietnam.
- 1962** John Glenn makes his famous orbits around the earth in Friendship 7. The event was televised on TV and watched by 135 million Americans.
June—OSCAR 2, the second amateur radio satellite is launched.
The first privately owned satellite "Telstar" relays TV programs.
U.S. blockades Russian ships delivering missiles, from reaching Cuba. The U.S. threatens to invade Cuba not knowing that the Russians already had 12 small nuclear missiles already in Cuba. The Russians fortunately back down.
- 1963** The first Russian woman orbits the earth.
Race riots are becoming common in the U.S.
115 countries sign a World Treaty banning nuclear test in the atmosphere, except France and China.
Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. starts his civil rights marches in Washington.
President Kennedy is assassinated in Dallas, Texas.

- 1964** U.S. Post Office releases Ham Radio stamp on the 50th anniversary of the ARRL. China explodes their first atomic bomb.
- 1965** U.S. bombs North Vietnam as 1st troops land in DaNang.
The first cigarette packages to have health warnings on them are produced.
National attention to ban the use of the LSD drug.
Ralph Nader, a young lawyer, fights for safety regulations on all cars.
The Treasury Dept. reports the Vietnam war is costing America \$1,200,000,000.00 per month.
- 1967** MRAC sponsors it's second Central Division ARRL Convention. The West Allis and Menomonee Falls clubs join with us to help at the convention.
"Hippies" and "Flower Children" movement starts.
There are race riots in 127 cities across the country, including Milwaukee. The National Guard is called out.
"Incentive Licensing" takes effect, returning Advanced class license and taking privileges away from Generals, effectively stopping growth of Amateur Radio.
- 1968** The Green Bay Packers win the 1st Super Bowl.
Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. is assassinated.
President Johnson orders a complete halt to the bombing of North Vietnam.
- 1969** Astronaut Neil Armstrong is first human to set foot on the moon.
- 1970** MRAC's youngest member at this time was Dave DeFebo WN9BWP, he would later become club President (twice).
Many club members participated in a open house program where they invited members of the club to come see their Ham Shacks.
We have nationwide protesting to end the Vietnam War.
- 1971** MRAC provides communications at the Schlitz Circus Parade on the 4th of July.
National Radio Co. files for Chapter 11 and ceased to manufacture radio equipment. Their HRO receivers were Ham Radio favorites.
18 year olds get the right to vote.
President Nixon has audio recording equipment installed in the White House.
- 1972** Allied Radio exits the mail order business.
President Nixon makes his famous China visit.
While campaigning for President, Alabama Governor George Wallace is shot and paralyzed from the waist down.
- 1973** The Vietnam war "ends".
The Watergate scandal starts. (Nixon audio tapes!!)
- 1974** MRAC Ham Chatter starts a regular monthly schedule instead of a random schedule.
The government starts printing gas-rationing coupons in case the gas shortages get out of hand. Long line and waits for gas as big oil corporations limited supply to raise prices.
Nixon is ordered to release 64 tapes in the Watergate investigation. President Nixon reveals cover-up and later resigns from office. President Ford pardons Nixon of all crimes.
The U.S. movie rating system starts.

- 1975** Unemployment in the U.S. reaches 6.5 million.
- 1976** The club offers code and theory classes at Wauwatosa East High School, to boost membership.
- 1977** MRAC begins having meetings at Wauwatosa Savings and Loan (having moved from the Milwaukee School Of Engineering).
- 1978** MRAC membership reaches 195.
The MRAC charged \$5.00 for classes and gave free membership for the balance of the year.
- 1979** MRAC has 198 members.
MRAC along with Milwaukee ARES stage an amateur radio show at Mayfair Mall. MRAC adds a dinner to the annual Old Timers' Nite/ Christmas Party to celebrate 60 years of affiliation with ARRL. ARRL Vice-President Dick Baldwin attends. Hams are given privileges on 10 MHz, 18 MHz, and 24 MHz at the World Administrative Radio Conference.
Three Mile Island nuclear accident. The core reached 5000 degrees before it was brought under control. (The beginning of the end of nuclear plant construction in the U.S.)
- 1980** Governor Lee Dreyfus signed documents proclaiming May 17th Amateur Radio Day in Wisconsin. This notice was displayed on a sign on City Hall. QST magazine has a picture of Milwaukee City Hall with Amateur Radio sign in the December issue.
- 1981** MRAC has a booth at the International Science & Engineering Fair at MECCA. The Milwaukee City Hall photo of Amateur Radio Day appears in a Norwegian Radio Relay League magazine. In Norway, May 17th is a national holiday similar to our 4th of July.
The club is polled by the ARRL about the new code free license proposal. Not one person in the club was in favor of it.
Channel 12 video tapes our Field Day site for the 5 and 10 O'clock news.
The first space shuttle Columbia goes into space.
- 1982** The FCC votes to retain the Morse code requirements for all grades of license.
- 1983** FCC maintains code requirements, there are many request to reconsider.
MRAC acts as QSL manager for Space Shuttle flight ST-9.
MRAC demonstrates 10 foot earth station satellite antenna to all Milwaukee area hams.
MRAC begins to administer amateur tests working with a Chicago VEC.
W5LFL becomes the first amateur to transmit from space aboard the Space Shuttle.
- 1984** MRAC goes into full operation as a Volunteer Examiner Coordinator (VEC).
FCC creates PRB-1 rule issuing a federal pre-emption over local tower laws.

- 1986** MRAC is QSL manager for Tony, W0ORE, on Space Shuttle Mission STS51-F.
MRAC field day group makes over 1000 contacts.
MRAC has a special event station at Polish Fest.
The membership votes to have the club picnic on the same day with Field Day.
Packet radio begins.
The Space Shuttle Challenger explodes on liftoff.
- 1987** MRAC provides communications for the Tri-County YMCA Races.
MRAC sends \$200 to the Clements Michigan Leance-Cruze Amateur Radio Club to help fight a lawsuit to defeat a ban on amateur radio antennas.
Russian nuclear power plant disaster at Chernobyl.
- 1988** MRAC call W9RH is used for a 10 meter net on 28.4 MHz.
- 1990** MRAC starts purchasing Field Day radio equipment and antennas.
Hubble Space Telescope is launched. Focus doesn't work.
Gulf War begins.
- 1991** MRAC sets up amateur station at Discovery World at the Milwaukee Museum.
MRAC has our last Field Day at the old Nike Missile site in Lannon.
Club members provide communications at the Channel 10/36 wine tasting event at Mayfair Mall.
Jim Harrington donates a Heathkit radio to the club for Field Day use.
MRAC License classes move to Marquette Electronics R&D Center.
FCC creates a new Technician license without a Morse code requirement.
- 1992** October—MRAC gets a repeater. The frequency is 147.045.
MRAC has first Field Day at the RR Museum in Cedarburg thanks to Fred Linn, W9NZF.
- 1993** MRAC classes for all grades of license and VE testing move to Village At Manor Park thanks to Phil Lehman, KB9FOQ.
- 1995** Position of MRAC board Chairman is abolished and new By-Laws are written.
- 1996** MRAC establishes nets on both 2 and 10 meters on Friday nights.
MRAC has the last meetings at Wauwatosa Savings Bank.
MRAC continues as VEC with Ed Willie W9PWG taking over from Jack Krause W9JK who ran it for 12 years.
MRAC holds last license class at Village At Manor Park.
- 1997** MRAC has new meeting location at Redemption Lutheran Church.
- 1998** Ed Willie W9PWG completes a record 9+ years as club president (after taking over from Harry Cieszki who moved to Florida).
Amateur Electronic Supply has its first "Superfest" with MRAC having a club table and conducting license exams.

1999

John Kraak KF9XL and Tom Fuzard KF9PU take over VEC duties after the death of Ed Willie W9PWG.

March meeting features Bart Jahnke W9JJ a Wisconsin native who works for the ARRL.

MRAC adds an email address for communicating with the board.

The FCC makes major changes to amateur rules, cutting license classes from 6 down to 3 with a single 5 wpm code test for the 2 highest classes.

2000

MRAC history compiled by Jim Tromblay, WB9LNU.

MRAC again offers license classes, now at Amateur Electronic Supply.

MRAC creates its own World Wide Web site.

MRAC VEC processes over 300 people in the first 4 months of the year in preparation of license changes on April 15.

MRAC Repeater is relocated atop a private business building near the center of Milwaukee.

The MRAC club auction is revived after a number of years of absence.

April 15—Code speed for General and Extra license reduced to 5 wpm. No new Novice and Advanced class licenses will be issued.

November—The largest and most expensive amateur satellite (Phase 3D or AMSAT-OSCAR 40) is launched.

The first ham activity from the International Space Station takes place.

Due to a close election and some possible voting irregularities, it took 37 days after the election to formally declare a new President of the US.

The Past Presidents of MRAC:

1917 Committee
1918 Committee
1919 L.S. Hillegas Baird 9HO
1920 Clarence Crapo 9VD
1921 Daniel Gellerup 9AOE
1922 Herbert Wareing 9NY
1923 E. T. Howell 9CVI
1924 E. T. Howell 9CVI
1925 Charles Polacheck 9DTK
1926 Fred Catel W9DTK
1927 F. D. Schunck W9AFZ
1928 Donald Seibel W9ESF
1929 George Ward W9DCE
1930 Louis Wollaeger W9ANA
1931 Clarence Crapo W9VD
1932 Frank Moore W9BVB
1933 C. A. Rosenbaum W9GHN
1934 Emil Felber W9RH
1935 Erwin Kries W9HRM
1936 George Ruger W9VWG
1937 Charles Meyer W9GVL
1938 William Brossman W9EQP
1939 N. J. Richard W9OUB
1940 Clarence Crapo W9VD
1941 Joseph Kircher W9NRX
1942 Norman Barnes W9CDY
1943 Norman Barnes W9CDY
1944 Norman Barnes W9CDY
1945 John Scarvaci W9GIL
1946 Ralph Koenig W9RUF
1947 Fred Catel W9DTK
1948 George Bowen W9DWI
1949 Ralph Koenig W9RUF
1950 Fred Zolin W9ONY
1951 Fred Zolin W9ONY
1952 Thomas Gettelman W9IZO
1953 Ken Eggert W9MOT
1954 Elden Belanger W9MDG
1955 Emil Felber W9RH
1956 Raymond Peschek W9LJU
1957 Richard Oberholtzer W9ZPV
1958 Douglas Pavek W9FDX
1959 Ken Eggert W9MOT
1960 Arlan Bowen W9QYW
1961 Russell Burss W9RKP
1962 J. Travis Baird W9VQD
1963 Royal Miller W9CJO
1964 Carl Rohde W9ROM
1965 Carl Rohde W9ROM
1966 Bernard Tower K9ZPP
1967 J. Travis Baird W9VQD
1968 J. Travis Baird W9VQD
1969 Richard Oberholtzer W9ZPV
1970 Richard Oberholtzer W9ZPV
1971 Richard Oberholtzer W9ZPV
1972 Jack McLeland W9ATK
1973 Jack McLeland W9ATK
1974 Lee Mushel K9WRU
1975 Elden Belanger W9MDG
1976 Elden Belanger W9MDG
1977 Elden Belanger W9MDG
1978 Robert Glamm W9UGN
1979 Robert Glamm W9UGN
1980 C. Reid Whipple K9IWC
1981 C. Reid Whipple K9IWC
1982 Dave DeFebo WB9BWP
1983 Dave DeFebo WB9BWP
1984 Chris Welton WD9GZL
1985 Ted Stiller WA9RDI
1986 Ted Stiller WA9RDI
1987 Harry Cieszki KD9AJ
1988 Harry Cieszki KD9AJ
1989 Ed Willie W9PWG
Start of 2 year terms...
1990 Ed Willie W9PWG
1992 Ed Willie W9PWG
1994 Ed Willie W9PWG
1996 Ed Willie W9PWG
1998 Dave DeFebo WB9BWP
2000 Dave DeFebo WB9BWP
2002
2004

Many thanks to all the members, officers, family members and friends of the Milwaukee Radio Amateurs' Club throughout its illustrious history—one of only a handful of the oldest continuously operating amateur radio clubs in the world!



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<http://www.qsl.net/mrac>

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