

CCARC News

Capital City Amateur Radio Club

February 2026

Including
news from
HARCMT



Headwaters Does Winter Field Day!

By Stacy KK7CJV

With most of our time and energy going into starting the NEW Club, it didn't leave much time to plan for Winter Field Day, but we knew there was interest in participating. A very wise ham once commented that he had not read in the WFD rules where it said we had to freeze our backsides off in order to participate. So, we decided on short notice to have WFD at our heated shop.

Eric built coax to run from the 50-foot tower and beam to the shop. He also erected a 2m beam that we could rotate to grab local calls, a new coil antenna that works on 160 meters, and an off-center-fed and end-fed antenna as well. Saturday morning while we were starting coffee for the crowd, Zak KJ7ZTE arrived from Butte. He came to grab the Satellite contact

Coming Events 2026

CCARC monthly meeting – February 2, 7pm at the Salvation Army, 1330 Hudson St. or on Google Meet, <https://meet.google.com/zfs-ctwp-bax>

March Mixer – March 21, 3 pm -7 pm, Brewhouse Downstairs.

Coffee Net – Every Saturday at 9 am on 147.22, Belmont Repeater. Eyeball @ Red Atlas at 9:30.

multiplier for the Club. He showed us the 3D-printed satellite antenna he made and the Look4Sat app on Samsung/Android phone to track the satellites. We all enjoyed watching and helping him try to snag the illusive satellite contact. No joy, but so much was learned by all. Two of our members got on the mic and tried HF for the first time, making contacts for the Club. Many came by for a chat over a cup of coffee and a huckleberry muffin, while others were able to get radio code plugs and DMR hot spots programmed, and tweak an out-of-alignment radio. Daniel KM7BCC and Will AJ7HI racked up the points for the Club on voice and CW. Daniel came to summer Field Day a newbie but at WFD was our powerhouse on voice. Will started his CW journey in October and is already in the advanced class of CWOPS. He banged out 47 CW contacts for the club, while Daniel and the rest of us made 381 voice contacts. I batted cleanup the last hour of the contest and ran a mini sprint on voice.



WFD sends out a bulletin to copy, and we tried! However, on CW we were told "it sounds like jibberish." On voice we had 60% copy; on digital 30% copy. Great team effort but no joy.

Overall, it was a great FIRST event for our NEW club. The bands were difficult, but we all learned so much through camaraderie and conversations all day long. Thank you, Sue KK7RYG, for the yummy breakfast casserole and sandwiches. Thank you to all who made our WFD event a success!

CCARC New Members- January

Matthew Jacques KM7DTA
mattjacques24@gmail.com

Gage Sappington KM7DTB
sappingtong@outlook.com

Daniel Pittman KG7TXS
dpdanpittman@gmail.com

CCARC New Members- October

Wayne J Radochonski KM7COR
bighornbouron@gmail.com

Tom Engle KM7CQU
t2engle@gmail.com

Crispin E Marsh KM7CQV
cskuzym@gmail.com

From a New Ham

By Brett Penner N7SKI

As a new amateur radio operator, I've been enjoying the learning process and exploring the many opportunities the hobby offers. One of my main activities so far has been operating FT8, a popular digital mode that makes it easier to understand radio behavior and propagation

conditions. Through FT8, I've already made international contacts with stations in Brazil, Aruba, Argentina, and Chile. It was an exciting experience that highlights the global reach of amateur radio. Along the way, I've also learned that having a well-designed and properly installed antenna is one of the most important factors in achieving reliable and effective communication.

In addition to digital operating, I've also participated in several Summits on the Air (SOTA) activations. These outings combine outdoor adventure with radio operating and have been a great way to build skills while connecting with other operators. Operating from elevated locations has provided unique challenges and rewards, and each activation has helped improve both technical and operating confidence. Portable antenna setups in these environments have further reinforced how critical antenna performance is in real-world conditions.

One of the most rewarding aspects of getting started in amateur radio has been the welcoming and supportive community. Fellow operators are always willing to share their knowledge and offer assistance when questions arise. Whether it's advice on equipment, antenna design, operating techniques, or propagation, experienced hams are eager to help newcomers succeed. This spirit of cooperation and mentorship makes amateur radio an especially enjoyable and encouraging hobby to be part of.





Trivia Players Set New Distance Record

By John Monson AJ7MT

Congratulations to team W7BYZ Joe and Jess! On January 25, 2026, they set a new trivia distance record playing via EchoLink from the big island of Hawaii, 3100 miles away. They beat their own distance record of a month earlier when they played from two locations in Illinois at a distance of approximately 1400 miles.

Team W7BYZ presently tops the list of distance achievement for trivia.

Our first long distance player was Ray KF6OJE/SK who joined us regularly from Spokane WA via an Allstar link to the Belmont repeater. Ray was about 317 miles away. Ray established his distance record in 2022 and played for a couple of years before his passing.

The 317-mile mark was then overtaken by Helena's pair of aces WA1TYB and N1NYT, Al and Kathe. They joined us for trivia using EchoLink on a couple of occasions with their family in the Vancouver, British Columbia area (Canadians!), setting a distance record of approximately 731 miles! This record stood for several years, and they still occasionally will join us when visiting the family.

What will the next distance record be?? Will Joe and Jess, team W7BYZ, not only hold the distance record, but possibly this fall unseat the first September "Home Coco the Trivia Mascot" Trivia Tournament Champion Daniel KM7BCC? Or will Daniel retain the title and keep Coco in his ham shack?? Tune in for Trivia Sunday nights from

7:30 to 8:30 on the Belmont repeater. We would love to have you either listen or play!

Building an FM Radio Kit

By Allen Le Vie ~ KH7AL

I'll date myself right out of the gate. Back in 1997, I joined the U.S. Air Force and attended basic and advanced electronics training in Biloxi, Mississippi. That's where the fundamentals were drilled in—resistors, capacitors, inductors, diodes, oscillators, logic circuits, power supplies, receivers, transmitters, and, importantly, soldering.

I always enjoyed soldering. Once you learn the prime directive—don't touch the hot end—the skill becomes about patience and finesse: tinning wire, creating proper heat bridges, and letting solder wick where it should. Those skills stayed with me throughout my career and found new life when I earned my ham radio license around 2011.

Fast forward to a couple of years ago, when my youngest son showed interest in learning to solder. We started with the basics and picked up a couple of electronic kits to build together. One of them—an FM radio kit—sat unfinished on my workbench for nearly a year until I decided it was time to complete it as part of my recent *Tangible Tangents* endeavor to make, build, or create something new each week.

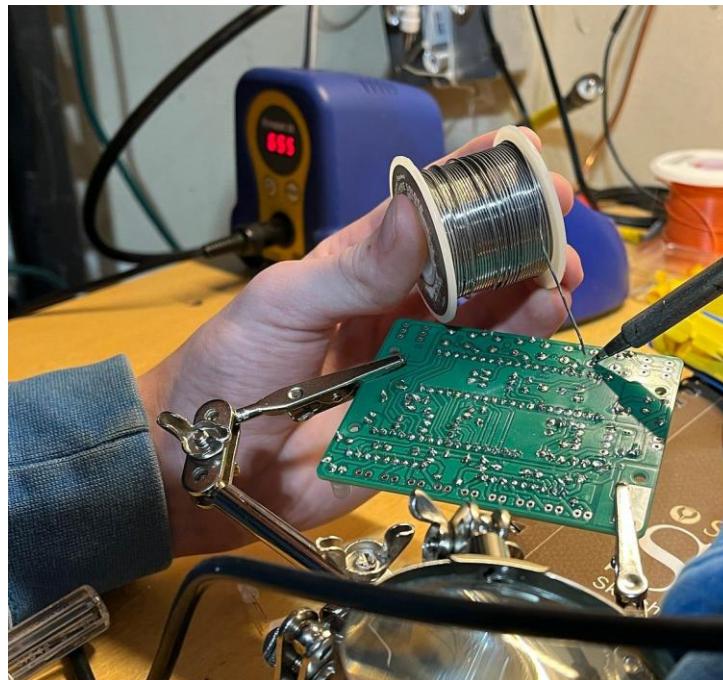
The ~\$30 FM radio kit was straightforward: identify components, place them, solder, clip leads, repeat. A magnifying glass helped with resistor color codes, but overall it was a pleasant, methodical build completed over two evenings.

The payoff? Powering it on and having it work. There's a simple satisfaction in that—especially

for anyone who's ever built, repaired, or aligned a radio.

Not everything was perfect. The signal-level LEDs never lit, despite checking polarity and reviewing the schematic. After some troubleshooting, I decided to leave well enough alone—the radio worked, and I didn't need blinking lights competing for my attention anyway.

The best part of the project wasn't the radio itself, though. It was the time spent building something tangible with my son—watching him learn patience, precision, and confidence with a soldering iron. Projects like this remind me why I still enjoy radio: invisible waves moving through the air, carrying information we can tune into with gear we can understand, build, and fix. The original streaming service.



If you've ever thought about brushing up on your soldering skills—or passing them on—there's no better excuse than a simple kit and a free evening at the bench.

To follow other *Tangible Tangents* of mine in coming weeks, check out my page on Substack: <https://thetangibleage.substack.com/>

~73, Allen

Headwaters Auction

HARCMT President
Pres@harcmt.com

HARCMT has received a rather large donation of ham items. At our February 16th business meeting we will have some silent auction items for sale. At our March 16th business meeting, we will have other silent auction items (CW keys, etc.) and the end to the sealed bid items (sealed bids will be opened). I will be pumping out pictures of the sealed bid items soon on Facebook and Instagram. All proceeds will go to fund our Club repeater system.

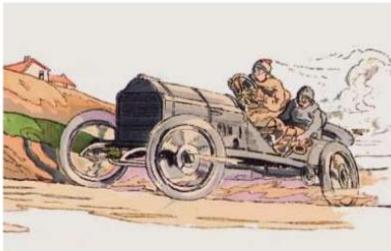
Please see the sealed bid auction form attached to this email.



J-38 US Army Signal Corps WWII Straight key (center)

Please contact Stacy KK7CJV with questions.

Vintage Car Lovers!



The Flathead Pioneer Auto Club Presents
MPCAC SPRING TOUR 2026

June 26,27,28, 2026
Headquarters and Accommodations

Hilton Garden Inn

1840 Highway 93 South
Kalispell, Montana 59901
Phone: 406-206-4203

30 Rooms Blocked until May 18th, 2026

Call and ask for the Flathead Pioneer Auto Club RATE
<http://www.hilton.com/en/attend-myevent/flatheadpioneerautoclubtour>
Standard King Room Rate \$229, includes two Breakfast vouchers

Please see Darrell K7IUI for more
information.

Or attend the next meeting of the
Classic Car Club.

Capital City Amateur
Radio Club
Helena, Montana



Capital City Classic Auto Club

DEDICATED TO THE PRESERVATION OF ANTIQUE AND COLLECTIBLE MOTOR VEHICLES

Helena Chapter of the Montana Pioneer & Classic Auto Club, Inc.

Officers for 2025	
President/Times Reporter:	Paul Christofferson
Vice President:	Don Wood
Treasurer:	Sharon Black
Secretary:	Jerry Burrows
Newsletter Editor:	Darrell Beckstrom



2026 Upcoming Events

February 8—Car Club meeting at Montana City Grill, 12:30 pm

Editor: Marla Unruh KM7LIB
Editing and proofing: Kathe N1NYT &
Al Simons WA1TYB.
Writers: CCARC members
Club website: n7rb.org
[CCARC Shack Tour](#) – website
with member profiles
JOIN US!
Membership \$25 per year. Contact Al
Simons for application info.
al@simonshome.org