



December 2020
Our 101th Year
Volume 58, Issue 12

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Website:

<http://www.mvara.org/>

The Voice Coil
Newsletter of the Mahoning
Valley Amateur Radio
Association
Established 1919

The Voice Coil

Prez Sez

First, I would like to congratulate Mike McCleery, K8PRR, Vice President, Raymond Bishop, W8CSM, Secretary, Dean DeMain, W8YSU, Treasurer, Mark Haverstock, K8MSH, Trustee, Andy Brincko, WA8ZLK, Trustee, John DeGutis, N8LVA, Trustee, and Joe Vasko, N8SEJ, Trustee. Thank you gentlemen for stepping up for your club--it is much appreciated!

Here we are Thanksgiving 2020. Who would have thought last year at this time we would be where we are? We're in a deadly pandemic infecting more than 8,000 people a day--and that number keeps climbing. Trumbull County has a mandatory stay-at-home order, which most people are ignoring in preparation for the Thanksgiving holiday.

Thanksgiving has been celebrated since the early 1600s, through good times and bad. There were the ones with wars, depressions and famine when there was so little money or food to be had by many.

This year, even though we have Covid-19 affecting our family plans, be thankful for all that we do have. I am thankful for having a roof over my head, a house to keep me warm, the love of my own family and great friends.



Wherever this Thanksgiving finds you, please stay safe my friends.
73,
Scott, KE4UHC



Next Meeting:

December 10, 2020
Online Zoom Meeting.
Email will be sent with a link prior to the meeting.

2019 Officers

President: Scott Wilton, KE4UHC
Vice President: Dave Brett,
KD8NZF
Secretary: Mike Malarky, W8IWD
Treasurer: Nancy Brett, KD8QNY
Trustees: Dean DeMain, W8YSU
Bryan Bartzi, KF8G
Jerry Goddard, KC8EFO
Mike McCleery, K8PRR

Newsletter Editor: Mark
Haverstock, K8MSH

Awards Manager: Dave Fairbanks,
N8NB, 330.759.6993, 4770 Logan
Ave. Youngstown, OH 44505

The Mahoning Valley Amateur
Radio Association, Inc, meets the
second Thursday of every month.
Location and time are subject to
change. Dues are \$20.00 per year,
\$10.00 each for additional family
member. Contact Nancy,
kd8qny@zoominternet.net for
membership details.

The club call is **W8QLY**;
equipment operated under this call
includes a two meter voice
repeater at 146.745 (-600, 110.9
PL). Club email:
mvara.w8qly@gmail.com

MONDAY NIGHT NET operates
every Monday at 9:00. PM on
146.745 MHz.

SKYWARN NET - First
Wednesday of the month at 8:30
PM on 146.745 MHz as weather
warrants.

ARES NET- First and third
Mondays of each month at 8:30
PM on 146.745 MHz; prior to the
Monday Night Net.

Congratulations to new 2021 officers:

Mike McCleery, K8PRR, Vice-President
Dean DeMain, W8YSU, Treasurer
Ray Bishop, W8CSM, Secretary
Mark Haverstock, K8MSH, Trustee
Joe Vasco, N8SEJ, Trustee
Andy Brinco, WA8ZLK, Trustee
John DeGutis, N8LVA, Trustee

Winter Project

Interested in building your own compact End-Fed HF
antenna that covers 40-6 meters? You'll have your
opportunity to build one in January with suport via Zoom.
This antenna requires a tuner—most built-in radio tuners
work fine, as well as external tuners.

You can build your own from scratch—a parts list with basic
instructions will be printed in the January *Voice Coil*. A
complete kit is also available with the enclosure box pre-
drilled and the SO-239 connector attached. Cost to cover
parts kit is \$15. If you're interested, contact Mark at:

mh@zoominternet.net



Current Activities

December 10: Monthly meeting, 7pm via Zoom.

VE Testing: Cancelled for December due to Covid risks.

Contact Us:

Email: mvara.W8QLY@gmail.com **Snail-mail:** MVARA, P.O. Box 14141, Poland, OH 44514

Meeting ideas/ suggestions? Contact Dave, KD8NZF, KD8NZF@zoominternet.net

Swap and Shop

Drake TR7. Includes RV7 Remote VFO, SP75 Speech Processor, MS7 Speaker, power supply and many spare boards and components, Service Manual, and Operators Manual. Asking \$900 OBO

Contact RANDY W3PCF / tanker60@gmail.com

--Analyzer [RIG EXPERT] AA-55 Zoom w/mnl

--K44 CW Keyboard & Reader w/mnl, pwr sup, ps-keyboard, & wired-plugs.

2m station:

--KENWOOD 281a 2M transceiver w/manual

--RT SYSTEM prog. software w/USB cable & CD

--ASTRON RS-20a power supply

--RG58au 50-ft. cable w/conn.

--ARROW OSJ146/440 J-Pole

Contact Ken, KC8Y cct66000@gmail.com

Cushcraft R8 Vertical from Msgr. Ashton's estate. Price is reduced...best whole dollar offer over \$100.00 takes it. Proceeds to be donated to charity.

Contact Andy, WA8ZLK. Cell: 330-774-1108, email: ajaybee92@gmail.com

--102" stainless whip with 3/8-24 in. threaded mount \$10

--Hustler HF Mobile Antenna Mast MO-2, 3/8-24 in. Male Thread Ends, 54 in. Length, Folds to 27 in. Two available, \$20 each

--5' lightweight TV mast, three available. \$5 each.

Contact Mark, K8MSH, mh@zoominternet.net

I have for sale a COMPLETE STATION, for a new ham or someone looking to upgrade to HF.

-YAESU FT 950 HF+6 METERS, with mic and manual

-USB SIGNALINK with cable , FT8 or digital modes

-FH2 Remote cw/ssb contest keyer

-CUSHCRAFT R-5 VERTICAL, 10,12,15,17,20 meters. Is currently down and in my back yard.

-MFJ Versa 3 KW Roller tuner

-MFJ 891 SWR/PWR meter

-MFJ 300 Watt dummy load

I am asking \$1000.00 for all and have been told that this is a steal and not asking enough??? Rig can be seen on my QRZ.com page. Using social distancing, this can be seen at my home QTH in Howland. Call or text, Jon Kovacs, K8LY, 330 883 7285.

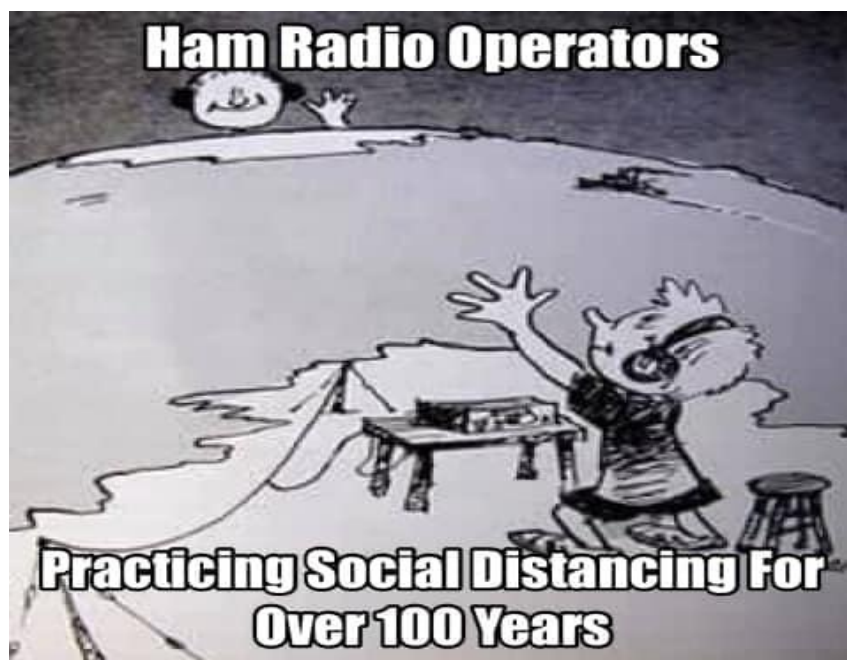
-2 heavy duty tables suitable for ham shack use approx 24" x 45". Very sturdy. \$20 each.

-Daiwa CN-801H 1.8 - 200 mhz cross needle pwr/swr meter. Nice big face and meters. Easy to read, in very good condition \$50

-TYT MD380 5w UHF DMR Handheld radio. Perfect, like new condition. Perfect battery. Programmed for Y-town area \$75

Contact Frank, WB8YHD, younghotdog@yahoo.com

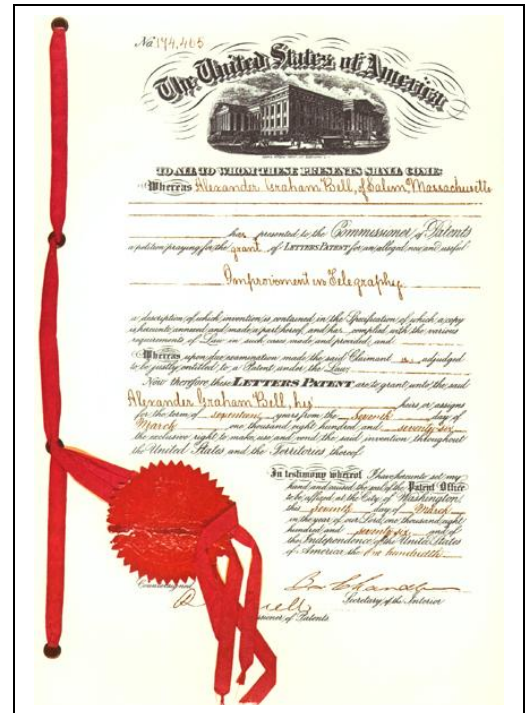
Swap and Shop Policies are on last page of the Voice Coil. Items are also posted on the MVARA website.



Ring a Bell?

Some of our club members will remember fondly Alexander Graham Bell. One of the legacies of Mr. Bell was the Bell Telephone Company and later the American Telephone and Telegraph Company aka AT&T.

Historically the Bell Telephone Company and the New England Telephone and Telegraph Company were created in the late 1800's. A few years later these merged and two new entities appeared, The National Bell Telephone Company and the International Bell Telephone Company. National Bell merged with American Speaking Telephone Company and became the American Bell Telephone Company. It was this company that became AT&T.



For most of the 20th Century, AT&T was the big dog in the telephone business but was viewed by many as too large and too powerful, and that led to its breakup in 1984. One of the spectacular assets created by AT&T was what was known as Bell Labs. In 1984 following the breakup, the labs were renamed to AT&T Bell Laboratories and in 2016 Nokia purchased the lab and renamed it to Nokia Bell Labs.

During its history it has been the premier research facility that has produced an astounding array of electronic breakthroughs such as radio astronomy, the transistor, the laser, the photovoltaic cell, the charge-coupled device (CCD), [information theory](#), the [Unix](#) operating system, and the programming languages B, C, C++, and S. The lab has received nine Nobel Prizes for work at the labs.

Throughout its history, the labs created a journal of their work that was available by subscription—a tradition that continues to current times. Browsing early issues of the journal you run across names such as C.E. Hartley, inventor of the Hartley Oscillator we all had to study for our Amateur Licenses, or William Shockley who along with John Bardeen and Walter Brattain invented the transistor.

If you would enjoy looking at the work they and others were doing you are in luck as the University of Pennsylvania maintains a downloadable archive of the Bell Journals through 1957 as part of their “Online Books” project. You can find the archive here by searching for University of Pennsylvania Bell Journals.

--Dave, KD8NZF

***Ham Humor:* HAM OP 3RD MOST POPULAR COSTUME THIS HALLOWEEN SEASON**



By [K5KAC](#), on the scene and in costume

Middletown, Conn. — According to Venture Costumes, a Halloween costume retailer, Sexy Nurses and Teen Zombies had better watch out. “If you follow our market data, there is a significant, wide-spread interest in dressing up like a Ham Radio Operator for Halloween, and we want to meet that demand,” said CEO Matt Larr.

The company has rolled out its much-researched “Ham Kit” in time for trick-or-treating and wild office parties. “I spent a lot of time with a scanner listening to local repeaters. I even snuck into a few club meetings to really get into the belly of the beast. I was horrified and bewildered,” noted Evie Christian, lead costume designer for Venture. “In my opinion, I think I’ve come up with a great, terrifying product.”

Venture’s “Ham Kit” comes bundled with clothing, hair/beard dye, and accessories. The clothing portion includes a pair of off-orange Crocs, a pair of “broken-in” sweatpants, “LET’S FREQ!” novelty shirt, and a pair of rose-tinted glasses. Accessories include a Beofunger plastic HT with open squelch effect, blood glucose monitoring kit, LED callsign badge and embroidered callsign hat. A bonus “Ham Musk” spray which promises to “Bring Terror to the Senses!” is available for \$5.99.

At press time, there were talks of a possible “Sexy Ham” novelty costume for women, however Venture’s creative team was having issues bridging the gap between the two concepts. The Ham Kit will be available at department stores soon with a MSRP of \$31.00 USD.

[hamhijinks.com](#)

Nationwide Red Cross Emergency Communications Drill

Mahoning County ARES participated in the Nationwide Red Cross Emergency Communications Fall Drill on November 14th. It was an evolution of the highly successful Spring Drill that had hundreds of participants from some 40 states and Puerto Rico.

The Fall Drill was a Winlink-specific event with the following goals: (1) pass traditional Red Cross (ARC) forms from as many states and as many radio amateurs as possible to one of six Divisional Clearinghouses, and (2) bring as many radio operators as possible up to a "basic" level of Winlink proficiency.

Winlink Global Radio Email is a network of amateur radio and authorized government-licensed stations that provides worldwide radio email using radio pathways where the internet is not present. The system is built, operated and administered entirely by licensed "Ham" volunteers. It supports email with attachments, position reporting, weather and information bulletins, and is well-known for its role in interoperable emergency and disaster relief communications. It is capable of operating completely without the internet--automatically--using smart-network radio relays. Visit <https://winlink.org/> for more information.

To prepare for the drill MC ARES members completed an exercise each week for 6 weeks. The exercises involved using Winlink to send and receive email using various forms, attachments, and features. These emails could be sent via radio over the air or via telnet over the internet. This helped us achieve goal number 2 of basic Winlink proficiency. We also used peer to peer mode (P2P) which allows stations to connect directly to each other. We verified we our local P2P mode capability by exchanging emails with each other on 80 meters which could be valuable in an emergency.

On November 14th MC ARES members participated in the drill by sending a message using ARC form 213 to a the Atlantic divisional clearinghouse of the Red Cross. We contributed to goal number one of having as many amateurs as possible pass traditional Red Cross forms.

If you are interested in public service or emergency communications and would like more information about Mahoning County ARES please visit our web site at <http://www.mahoning-ares.org/> and check into the Mahoning County ARES net the first and third Monday of the month at 8:30 pm on the W8QLY repeater 146.745 pl 110.9.

Rich Slutz, KB8GAE MC AEC



**American
Red Cross**

Ohio Radio: WLW and The Blaw-Knox Antenna

From the Ohio Historical Marker:

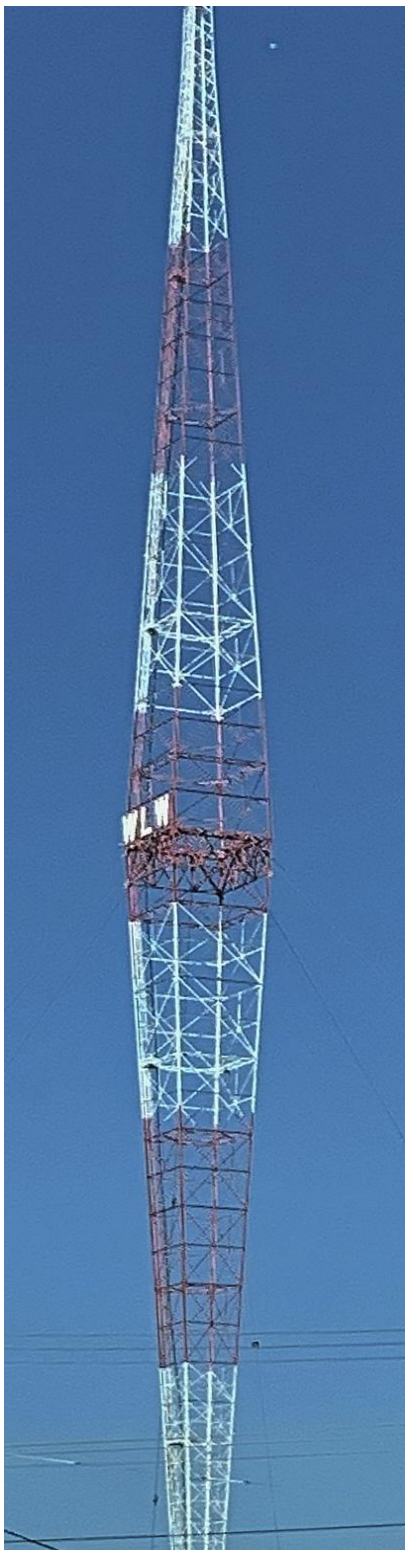
"In 1922, during the infancy of broadcast radio, the call letters WLW were assigned to the station begun by Cincinnati Powel Crosley, Jr. The station moved its transmitting operations to Mason in 1928, and by April 17, 1934, WLW had permission to operate experimentally with 500,000 watts. Becoming the first and only commercial radio station to broadcast at this 'superpower', WLW was formally opened at 500,000 watts by President Franklin D. Roosevelt on May 2, 1934. Using its 831-foot Blaw-Knox antenna to broadcast at ten times the power of any station, it earned the title 'The Nation's Station'. Locals reported hearing broadcasts on barbed wire fences, milking machines, rainspouts, water faucets, and radiators. The custom built transmitter, a joint venture between RCA, GE, and Westinghouse, remained in operation until March 1939 when the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) ordered the station to return to broadcasting at 50,000 watts."

In early 1933, WLW began construction of a new 500,000 watt superpower facility at Mason, Ohio after approval of the Federal Radio Commission. RCA supplied the 500KW transmitter. A new 831 foot, half wave, end-fed, Blaw-Knox double diamond-shaped vertical antenna weighing 136 tons was erected for the small sum (in today's dollars) of \$46,000. The wider, middle of the tower structure is 35 ft. square. A concrete lined pond was built in front of the transmitter building for transmitter cooling. Water was pumped through specially designed water cooled tubes, and was then sprayed into the air by fountains, returning back into the pond.

The Blaw-Knox company was a manufacturer of steel structures and construction equipment based in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Today, the company is best known for its unique radio towers, most of which were constructed during the 1930s in the United States. Although Blaw-Knox built many kinds of towers, the term Blaw-Knox tower usually refers to the company's unusual, so-called "diamond cantilever" design, which is held upright by guy wires attached only at the vertical center of the mast, where its cross-section is widest. A 1942 advertisement claims that 70% of all radio towers in the US were built by Blaw-Knox.

On January 1, 1934 the commission authorized WLW to begin using the 500,000 watts on an experimental basis using the call W8XO. An operational license was granted on April 17, 1934 to operate at 500,000 watts at regular hours under the WLW call letters. Under great fanfare, on Wednesday, May 2, 1934, President Roosevelt pressed a telegraph key in the White House which turned on "RCA 1", the WLW transmitter.

From: <http://radio-timetraveller.blogspot.com/2013/06/wlw-and-blaw-knox-antenna.html> Tower photo by John Bennett



Let's organize a nationwide new ham "boot camp"

By Dan, [KB6NU](#)

I've helped hundreds of students get their licenses or upgrade their licenses over the past 15 years. I'm proud of that, but I realize that getting them licensed is only part of the process. To become successful hams, and to have as much fun as possible with ham radio, they have to learn a lot more. I always offer to help my students with selecting a new radio or setting up a shack, and some of them actually take me up on the offer, but I'm only one guy. There are only so many that I can help in this way.

Over the years, there have been several proposals to help newly-licensed hams. For example, the [Spring 2017 issue](#) of *Radio Waves*, the ARRL newsletter for amateur radio license instructors, included the article, "[Making a good hobby better through post-licensing enrichment](#)." In this article, Tim Busch, N0CKR, proposed a series of short classes, each teaching specific skills relating to amateur radio, including how to program a radio, how to solder, how to use a multimeter, and more. I [blogged about this article](#) back then.

More recently, QST published the article, "[Ham Bootcamp](#)" by Fred Kemmerer, AB1OC, in the October 2020 issue. It describes a program developed by the Nashua (NH) Amateur Radio Society that aims to provide the mentoring that many hams need to get active. It includes many of the same topics that N0KCR listed in his program, but is a little more geared towards operating.

I think both of these are great programs, but the number of teachers needed to run these programs is the limiting factor. Back in 2017, I sent an email to local clubs, inquiring as to whether there would be any interest in organizing a region-wide new ham program. My thinking was that if I could get each of the clubs in Southeast Michigan to take responsibility for one or two of the new ham classes, we could provide the necessary training and get more of our new Techs and Generals on the air. Unfortunately, I didn't get a big response to my first email and then just failed to follow up.

Taking the bootcamp online

I'd like to try this again, but this time, take the bootcamp online. Since June, I've been teaching license classes online. I've taught four Tech classes and one General class, and while I still prefer teaching in person, teaching online license classes works. I don't see any reason why an online bootcamp wouldn't work.

Dan Romanchik, KB6NU, is the author of the KB6NU amateur radio blog (KB6NU.Com), the "No Nonsense" amateur radio license study guides (KB6NU.Com/study-guides/).

Editor's note: *If you haven't read Fred's article in QST yet, be sure to do so. Getting hams licensed is a first step, and we've become pretty good at it. But they need guidance and support if they're going to become an active part of the ham radio community. The question always seems to be: "I got my license—now what?" We, as a club, need to take on the role of Elmers and show them the "what."*

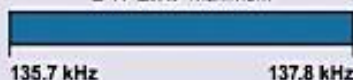
US Amateur Radio Bands

Operator license classes: **E** = Amateur Extra **A** = Advanced **G** = General **T** = Technician **N** = Novice
 CW operation is permitted throughout all amateur bands. Except as noted, all frequencies are in megahertz (MHz).

■ = RTTY, data, phone, image
 ■ = USB phone, RTTY, data and CW
 ■ = RTTY and data
 ■ = phone and image
■ = SSB phone
 = CW only

LF – Low Frequency band

2200 Meters (135 kHz) E,A,G
 1 W EIRP maximum

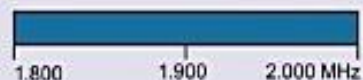


MF – Medium Frequency bands

630 Meters (472 kHz) E,A,G
 5 W EIRP max, except in Alaska within 496 miles of Russia where the limit is 1 W EIRP



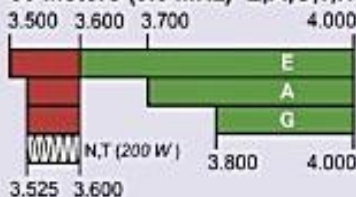
160 Meters (1.8 MHz) E,A,G



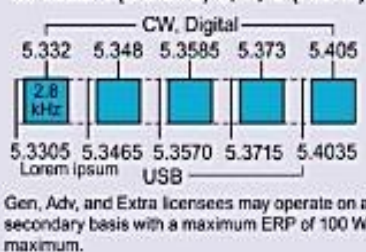
Amateurs wishing to operate on **2200 or 630 meters** must first register with the Utilities Technology Council online at <https://utc.org/plc-database-amateur-notification-process/>. You need only register once for each band.

HF – High Frequency bands

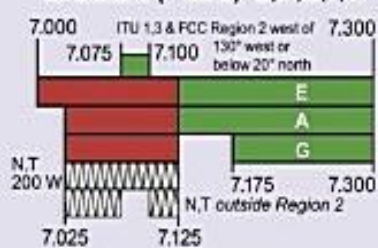
80 Meters (3.5 MHz) E,A,G,T,N



60 Meters (5.3 MHz) E, A, G (100 W)



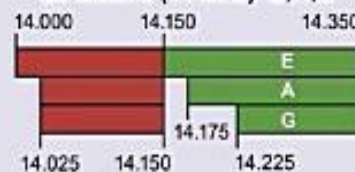
40 Meters (7 MHz) E,A,G,T,N



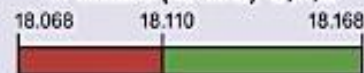
30 Meters (10.1 MHz) E,A,G



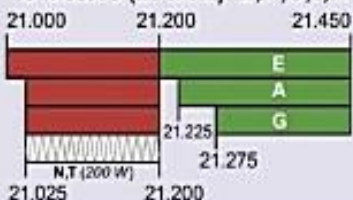
20 Meters (14 MHz) E,A,G



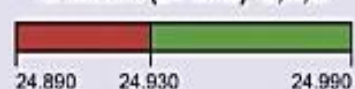
17 Meters (18 MHz) E,A,G



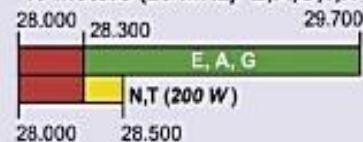
15 Meters (21 MHz) E,A,G,T,N



12 Meters (24 MHz) E,A,G



10 Meters (28 MHz) E,A,G,T,N



VHF – Very High Frequency bands

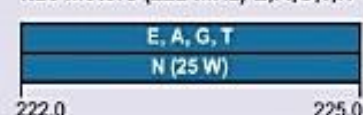
6 Meters (50 MHz) E,A,G,T



2 Meters (144 MHz) E,A,G,T



1.25 Meters (222 MHz) E,A,G,T,N

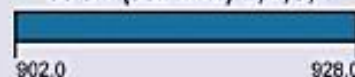


UHF – Ultra High Frequency bands

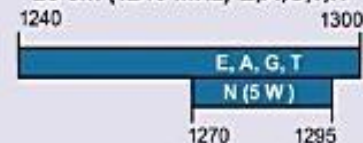
70 cm (420 MHz) E,A,G,T



33 cm (902 MHz) E,A,G,T



23 cm (1240 MHz) E,A,G,T,N



SHF&EHF – Super and Extremely High Frequency bands

All licensees except Novices are authorized all modes on the following frequencies:

2300-2310 MHz	3300-3500 MHz	10.0-10.5 GHz	47.0-47.2 GHz	122.25-123.0 GHz	241-250 GHz
2390-2450 MHz	5650-5925 MHz	24.0-24.25 GHz	76.0-81.0 GHz	134-141 GHz	All above 275 GHz

See www.arrl.org/band-plan for detailed band plans.

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 OTAbands rev. 11/8/2019

Mahoning Valley Amateur Radio Association 2021 Membership

Date: _____

Name: _____ Call: _____

Spouse/Family : _____ Call: _____

Mailing Address _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Home Phone # _____ Cell # _____

Email: _____
 (The MVARA Voice Coil, the club newsletter, will be emailed to this address)

ARRL member? **Yes** Expiration Month & Year _____ **No**

Do you want the following to be included in the membership list available to all members?

- | | | |
|---------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Name and Call | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Address | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Phone | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Email Address | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |

Membership

- | | | | |
|---|--|---|----------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Renewal</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>New Member</i> | Single membership \$20.00 | \$ _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Renewal</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>New Member</i> | Additional family members, \$10.00 each | \$ _____ |

W8QLY Repeater Support

- | | | |
|----------|-----------------------------|----------|
| \$12.00 | Basic Support Donation | \$ _____ |
| \$50.00 | Gold Level Support Donation | \$ _____ |
| \$ _____ | Other Support Donation | \$ _____ |

Total Enclosed \$ _____

***Make checks payable to: Mahoning Valley Amateur Radio Association
 Please bring this form and your payment to the next meeting or mail to: MVARA,
 P.O. Box 14141, 125 West McKinley Way, Youngstown, Ohio 44514***

Amateur License Refresher



It's probably been awhile since you took your Amateur License exam. Here are a few sample questions from the current question pools just to keep those synapses firing.

Extra Pool

E1E01

For which types of out-of-pocket expenses do the Part 97 rules state that VEs and VECs may be reimbursed?

- A. Preparing, processing, administering, and coordinating an examination for an amateur radio operator license
- B. Teaching an amateur operator license examination preparation course
- C. No expenses are authorized for reimbursement
- D. Providing amateur operator license examination preparation training materials

E1E02

Who does Part 97 task with maintaining the pools of questions for all U.S. amateur license examinations?

- A. The VEs
- B. The FCC
- C. The VECs
- D. The ARRL

General Pool

G4C01

Which of the following might be useful in reducing RF interference to audio frequency devices?

- A. Bypass inductor
- B. Bypass capacitor
- C. Forward-biased diode
- D. Reverse-biased diode

G4C02

Which of the following could be a cause of interference covering a wide range of frequencies?

- A. Not using a balun or line isolator to feed balanced antennas
- B. Lack of rectification of the transmitter's signal in power conductors
- C. Arcing at a poor electrical connection
- D. Using a balun to feed an unbalanced antenna

Answers pg. 2

Got some time on your hands? The pandemic is going to be around for awhile, and winter is coming. Why not give contesting a try? It can be something low-stress like a QSO party or highly competitive like the November Sweepstakes. Be sure to check out the contest list at the end of this section after you read:

CONTESTING – 10 Steps to FUN and Success from N1GNV

1. Read the contest rules. Understand what bands you can use, what your entry category will be, and what the "exchange" is. Simply, that's the information you will give to the other station and he/she will give to you. In the CQWW, for example, you send them a signal report and your CQ "Zone". Since I live in the Eastern US, I'm in Zone 5, so I would send "59 05". Note that by tradition, in a contest everyone has a 59 or 599 signal
2. Get with the program. Specifically, a logging program. There are quite a few options out there. My personal choice is the N1MM Logger It's free and has an amazing array of features. It's updated regularly, and has an extremely active online support community. It also interfaces with just about any modern HF radio you might own. There is a bit of a learning curve involved, so you don't want to wait until the last minute to install it and familiarize yourself with it. Get it now, connect your rig, and spend a little time with it. You might want to start a "fake contest" -- select CQWW, for instance, and enter some calls. Get to understand the entry window, and what other windows you might or might not want open during the contest. After you enter a few dozen fictitious contacts, make sure that the program will produce a Cabrillo file with an accurate score and summary. Hint: If it doesn't, the problem is in your setup, not the program itself. And finally -- don't get into the habit of hearing a station, writing his call and info down on paper, and then entering it in the computer. This only wastes time and leads to more mistakes. Enter it straight into the program. And if you already have logging software installed, make sure you have the latest upgrades and support files installed and working.
3. More Butt-in-Chair-Operating-Time = more contacts. Turn off distractions like texting, Facebook, e-mail, TV, broadcast radio, etc. Concentrate. But don't forget to take breaks. For 5 minutes every hour, get up, stretch, get some fresh air and a glass of water or a cup of coffee.
4. Set an achievable goal. Face it. If you're not an experienced contester with a "Big Gun" station (yet!) you're not going to win. But you can certainly try to beat your score in last year's contest. Or work DXCC in a weekend. Or outscore your buddy across town.
5. Study propagation forecasts, and get a sense of what bands are likely to be open to areas you want to work, and at what times. This will help you come up with a basic plan. But remember that band openings can occur at any time, so if you're operating in a category that allows it, keep an eye on the DX cluster because those openings can often be brief but intense.

6. Don't waste time in pileups early in the contest, especially if you have a Little Pistol station like mine. Sure, give those rare ones a call or two, you may get lucky. But you're competing with guys running plenty of power into big antennas. Go back to them later in the contest, after they've worked all the Big Guns. Often enough they'll be begging for contacts and you'll work them easily.
7. Work those mults! Most contests include "multipliers" in their scoring system. Basically, your score is calculated like this: You get a set number of points for each contact. Then, depending on the contest, you get one mult for each country, or each state, or each something that you work. Multiply your points by the number of mults, and that's your total score. You can see that each mult makes a much bigger difference in your score than another contact in the same country or state. Again, read the rules for the contest you're operating in.
8. Know those knobs! Try to familiarize yourself with the controls on your radio. Just about every rig has an attenuator, a pre-amp, an RF Gain control, and a noise blanker. Most also include an IF shift or pass-band tuning adjustment. An old trick that QRP (very low power) operators use is to turn OFF the pre-amp, and turn ON some attenuation. That may seem counter-intuitive. But now if a station is loud to you, the chances are much better that you're also loud to him. Let his big antennas and high power do the "heavy lifting". Similarly, turning down your RF gain can knock down a nearby (in frequency) Big Gun so you can work a weaker station.
9. Use standard phonetics. My call is N1GNV. Years ago, I enjoyed having a small vegetable garden. It was kinda fun to announce my call as No One Grows Nicer Vegetables on the local repeater or among Ham Radio friends. But in a contest, that only causes confusion and mistakes -- and is considered poor practice. November One Golf November Victor is what the other guy is expecting to hear. In noisy or otherwise difficult conditions I might say "Golf November Victor, Germany Norway Victoria" but that's about it. Standard Phonetics in contests, always.
10. Listen before you call. Make sure you've got the other station's call and exchange. You can even pre-enter it in your logging software. Listen to his pattern. Does he say "QRZ?" after each contact? You want to make sure you're transmitting when he's listening. Work him (making sure he's got YOUR call correct!), hit enter, and he's in your log. Move on to the next one. Bonus Tip: Many Hams travel to rare locations and assemble stations just for the major contests, particularly CQWW. In the days leading up to the event, they'll be testing their equipment on the air. That can be a great opportunity to test your own setup and snag a few more countries at the same time.

Finally -- this is a hobby. It's supposed to be FUN!! Enjoy the contest, and I hope to work you on all the bands.

Contest and Special Event Operating Information

Dave Fairbanks N8NB

Data below as well as more information courtesy of the following website:

<http://www.hornucopia.com/contestcal/index.html>.

December 2020

+ Worldwide Sideband Activity Contest	0100Z-0159Z, Dec 1
+ QCX Challenge	0300Z-0400Z, Dec 1
+ RTTYOPS Weeksprint	1700Z-1900Z, Dec 1
+ QRP Fox Hunt	0200Z-0330Z, Dec 2
+ Phone Fray	0230Z-0300Z, Dec 2
+ CWops Mini-CWT Test	1300Z-1400Z, Dec 2
+ VHF-UHF FT8 Activity Contest	1700Z-2000Z, Dec 2
+ CWops Mini-CWT Test	1900Z-2000Z, Dec 2
+ QRP ARCI Topband Sprint	0000Z-0300Z, Dec 3
+ CWops Mini-CWT Test	0300Z-0400Z, Dec 3
+ RTTYOPS Weeksprint	1700Z-1900Z, Dec 3
+ NRAU 10m Activity Contest	1800Z-1900Z, Dec 3 (CW) and 1900Z-2000Z, Dec 3 (SSB) and 2000Z-2100Z, Dec 3 (FM) and 2100Z-2200Z, Dec 3 (Dig)
+ SKCC Sprint Europe	2000Z-2200Z, Dec 3
+ NCCC RTTY Sprint	0145Z-0215Z, Dec 4
+ QRP Fox Hunt	0200Z-0330Z, Dec 4
+ NCCC Sprint	0230Z-0300Z, Dec 4
+ ARRL 160-Meter Contest	2200Z, Dec 4 to 1600Z, Dec 6
+ UFT Meeting	0500Z-0800Z, Dec 5 and 1500Z-1800Z, Dec 5 and 0700Z-1000Z, Dec 6
+ Wake-Up! QRP Sprint	0600Z-0629Z, Dec 5 and 0630Z-0659Z, Dec 5 and 0700Z-0729Z, Dec 5 and 0730Z-0800Z, Dec 5
+ PRO CW Contest	1200Z, Dec 5 to 1159Z, Dec 6
+ RTTYOPS Weekend Sprint	1600Z-1959Z, Dec 5
+ FT Roundup	1800Z, Dec 5 to 2359Z, Dec 6
+ EPC Ukraine DX Contest	2000Z, Dec 5 to 1959Z, Dec 6
+ K1USN Slow Speed Test	0000Z-0100Z, Dec 7
+ OK1WC Memorial	1630Z-1729Z, Dec 7
+ Worldwide Sideband Activity Contest	0100Z-0159Z, Dec 8
+ ARS Spartan Sprint	0200Z-0400Z, Dec 8
+ RTTYOPS Weeksprint	1700Z-1900Z, Dec 8
+ NAQCC CW Sprint	0130Z-0330Z, Dec 9
+ QRP Fox Hunt	0200Z-0330Z, Dec 9
+ Phone Fray	0230Z-0300Z, Dec 9
+ CWops Mini-CWT Test	1300Z-1400Z, Dec 9
+ VHF-UHF FT8 Activity Contest	1700Z-2000Z, Dec 9
+ CWops Mini-CWT Test	1900Z-2000Z, Dec 9
+ CWops Mini-CWT Test	0300Z-0400Z, Dec 10
+ RTTYOPS Weeksprint	1700Z-1900Z, Dec 10
+ NCCC RTTY Sprint	0145Z-0215Z, Dec 11
+ QRP Fox Hunt	0200Z-0330Z, Dec 11
+ NCCC Sprint	0230Z-0300Z, Dec 11

+ ARRL 10-Meter Contest	0000Z, Dec 12 to 2400Z, Dec 13
+ PODXS 070 Club Triple Play Low Band Sprint	0000Z, Dec 12 to 2359Z, Dec 14
+ TRC Digi Contest	0600Z, Dec 12 to 1800Z, Dec 13
+ SKCC Weekend Sprintathon	1200Z, Dec 12 to 2400Z, Dec 13
+ RTTYOPS Weekend Sprint	1600Z-1959Z, Dec 12
+ International Naval Contest	1600Z, Dec 12 to 1559Z, Dec 13
+ QRP ARCI Holiday Spirits Homebrew Sprint	2000Z-2300Z, Dec 13
+ CQC Great Colorado Snowshoe Run	2100Z-2259Z, Dec 13
+ K1USN Slow Speed Test	0000Z-0100Z, Dec 14
+ 4 States QRP Group Second Sunday Sprint	0100Z-0300Z, Dec 14
+ OK1WC Memorial	1630Z-1729Z, Dec 14
+ Worldwide Sideband Activity Contest	0100Z-0159Z, Dec 15
+ RTTYOPS Weeksprint	1700Z-1900Z, Dec 15
+ NAQCC CW Sprint	0130Z-0330Z, Dec 16
+ QRP Fox Hunt	0200Z-0330Z, Dec 16
+ Phone Fray	0230Z-0300Z, Dec 16
+ CWops Mini-CWT Test	1300Z-1400Z, Dec 16
+ CWops Mini-CWT Test	1900Z-2000Z, Dec 16
+ CWops Mini-CWT Test	0300Z-0400Z, Dec 17
+ RTTYOPS Weeksprint	1700Z-1900Z, Dec 17
+ NCCC RTTY Sprint	0145Z-0215Z, Dec 18
+ QRP Fox Hunt	0200Z-0330Z, Dec 18
+ NCCC Sprint	0230Z-0300Z, Dec 18
+ AGB-Party Contest	1600Z-1700Z, Dec 18
+ Russian 160-Meter Contest	2000Z-2400Z, Dec 18
+ RAC Winter Contest	0000Z-2359Z, Dec 19
+ Feld Hell Sprint	0000Z-2359Z, Dec 19
+ OK DX RTTY Contest	0000Z-2400Z, Dec 19
+ Padang DX Contest	1200Z, Dec 19 to 1159Z, Dec 20
+ Croatian CW Contest	1400Z, Dec 19 to 1400Z, Dec 20
+ RTTYOPS Weekend Sprint	1600Z-1959Z, Dec 19
+ ARRL Rookie Roundup, CW	1800Z-2359Z, Dec 20
+ Run for the Bacon QRP Contest	2300Z, Dec 20 to 0100Z, Dec 21
+ K1USN Slow Speed Test	0000Z-0100Z, Dec 21
+ OK1WC Memorial	1630Z-1729Z, Dec 21
+ Worldwide Sideband Activity Contest	0100Z-0159Z, Dec 22
+ RTTYOPS Weeksprint	1700Z-1900Z, Dec 22
+ SKCC Sprint	0000Z-0200Z, Dec 23
+ Phone Fray	0230Z-0300Z, Dec 23
+ CWops Mini-CWT Test	1300Z-1400Z, Dec 23
+ CWops Mini-CWT Test	1900Z-2000Z, Dec 23
+ CWops Mini-CWT Test	0300Z-0400Z, Dec 24
+ RTTYOPS Weeksprint	1700Z-1900Z, Dec 24
+ NCCC RTTY Sprint	0145Z-0215Z, Dec 25
+ NCCC Sprint	0230Z-0300Z, Dec 25
+ Gedebage CW Contest	0000Z-2359Z, Dec 26
+ DARC Christmas Contest	0830Z-1059Z, Dec 26
+ Stew Perry Topband Challenge	1500Z, Dec 26 to 1500Z, Dec 27
+ RTTYOPS Weekend Sprint	1600Z-1959Z, Dec 26
+ RAEM Contest	0000Z-1159Z, Dec 27
+ K1USN Slow Speed Test	0000Z-0100Z, Dec 28

+ QCX Challenge	1300Z-1400Z, Dec 28
+ OK1WC Memorial	1630Z-1729Z, Dec 28
+ QCX Challenge	1900Z-2000Z, Dec 28
+ Worldwide Sideband Activity Contest	0100Z-0159Z, Dec 29
+ QCX Challenge	0300Z-0400Z, Dec 29
+ RTTYOPS Weeksprint	1700Z-1900Z, Dec 29
+ QRP Fox Hunt	0200Z-0330Z, Dec 30
+ Phone Fray	0230Z-0300Z, Dec 30
+ CWops Mini-CWT Test	1300Z-1400Z, Dec 30
+ CWops Mini-CWT Test	1900Z-2000Z, Dec 30
+ CWops Mini-CWT Test	0300Z-0400Z, Dec 31
+ Bogor Old and New Contest	0900Z-2359Z, Dec 31
+ RTTYOPS Weeksprint	1700Z-1900Z, Dec 31

Universal Radio Closes Its Doors

A second ham radio retailer in Ohio has called it quits.

Universal was founded in 1942 by F.R. "Gibby" Gibb W8IJ. After Gibby became a silent key, his XYL ran the business briefly and sold it to Thomas Harrington, W8OMV, in 1977 who moved it to Reynoldsburg.

Universal has been owned by Barbara KC8VWI and Fred N8EKU Osterman since 1982. Below is the official announcement:



Dear Friends of Universal Radio,

Time waits for no one, and that includes Barbara and myself. We have decided to retire and our current location in Worthington will close on November 30, 2020. Even though the store is closing we will fulfill all existing customer orders and have a large amount of inventory to close-out. The Universal Radio website will be maintained for the foreseeable future to sell this remaining stock, publications and some select products. Unfortunately the lack of a store front showroom will preclude us from carrying some manufacturers' products.

I am very fortunate to have been in the radio business for over 50 years, 13 at Radio Shack and 37 at Universal Radio. We have met many wonderful people along the journey who have supported me personally as well as Universal Radio. It has been a privilege to have a continuous career in the fascinating field of radio since 1969. Please accept our sincere "Thank You" for your support of Universal Radio for these many years, and for the months to come.

Our new address for correspondence and mail order is below. This is not a storefront.

Universal Radio Inc.
752 N. State St. Unit 222
Westerville, OH 43082
 Phone: 614 866-4267

Thank you & 73,
 Fred Osterman N8EKU
 Barbara Osterman KC8VWI

THE LAST WORD

“Nothing in life is to be feared; it is only to be understood. Now is the time to understand more, so that we may fear less.” — **Marie Curie**



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Submissions must be received **no later than the 24th** of the month prior to the month of issue, unless otherwise specified. **Submissions should be in MS Word format or ASCII text—no PDF, please!** Material received after the deadline will be used in the next month's VOICE COIL if it is still current and /or newsworthy.

Swap and Shop Policies

Swap and Shop listings are open to all licensed Mahoning Valley Hams, based on space available—you don't need to be an MVARA member. Please submit your list to mvara.w8qly@gmail.com **AND** mvaravoiccoil@gmail.com for placement in both *Voice Coil* and website. MVARA assumes no responsibility for transactions made or inaccuracies in ads. You are responsible for checking your ad and notifying us of any corrections. Ads will run for two consecutive issues unless notified otherwise.

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