



Mahoning Valley Amateur Radio Association

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Voice Coil

January 2025

mvara.w8qly@gmail.com

The Voice Coil - Volume 25-1

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Vice President	Ralph Streb K8TCP
Secretary	Rich Slutz KB8GAE
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President's Corner

A chill is in the air and it's that time of year when people seem to be more considerate. Christmas is just days away and the rush is on for that final or perfect gift for a loved one or friend. With Christmas so near that means that New Years is just around the corner and hopefully you will have your Christmas present from someone or one that you bought yourself hooked up and working soon.

All of the children in my life have grown up and instead of toy trucks and bicycles are gone its just a matter of a few bucks in a card now a days. I wish we had those days back again I sure miss them. Cindy and I want to wish everyone a happy, healthy and safe Merry Christmas and a happy and prosperous New Year.

Upcoming MVARA Events

Date	Event	Location
January 9, 2025	MVARA Meeting	Boardman
January 25, 2025	Winter Field Day	Youngstown

January Club Program

At our January meeting we will have a Virtual Visit with Steve Anderson, W1EMI. Steve is the Senior RF Engineer in the lab. He assists amateur radio operators in resolving RFI problems; works with local RFI teams to resolve RFI issues; identifies and conducts testing on devices with significant RFI potential; serves as staff liaison to the ARRL EMC committee; ARRL liaison to the FCC and industry groups that focus on EMC and RFI issues; and participates in noise surveys.



MVARA 2025 Renewals Are Open

Yep, it's time to renew your membership with MVARA. You can renew in person at the January meeting or online with PayPal. A fillable PDF is on the website here with details:

<https://www.mvara.org/mbrshpfrm/2025%20Membership%20Form.pdf>

**100 Anniversary ARRL Handbook
giveaway!**

**Congratulations to Robert Yurchison, KF8CDE,
Our Handbook Winner**

Winter Field Day

MVARA formed a group of interested operators for the 2025 Winter Field Day. They will be using a caboose at the Mahoning Valley Railroad Heritage and current plans are for three transmitters. Mostly dipole antennas will be set up in the yard. The event is the weekend of January 25/26. They have firm plans to operate on the 25th and will decide on the 26th based on participation. On Air operation starts at 11:00am and plans are to operate at least into the evening – overnight is again based on participation. Similar to Summer Field Day, they allow



setup starting at 11:00am the day before and the crew has plans to do that. For more information or to get involved, get in touch with Ralph K8TCP, coolguy@thegamingcorner.net , and check the WFD website: <https://winterfieldday.org/>

How We Got Here

Since we are starting the New Year, it seems this would be a good time to reflect on some of the activities the club has undertaken over the years that shaped what we are now. Andy Brincko WA8ZLK is featured later in this newsletter as one of our long-time members and agreed to take on an article about the permutations our repeater has gone through.

Repeaters were first introduced in the Mahoning Valley in the late 1960s or early 1970s. I recall a machine on either 34/91 or 34/97. Those weren't standard pairs by today's band plan, but back then there weren't any "standards yet". It was run by Ralph Sherman W8IOO (SK) and Edwin "Lanny" Nass, WA8UWH. They were on the engineering staff at WKBN Radio and TV up on Sunset Drive on Youngstown's south side. They were MVARA members, but their machine wasn't owned by the club. I don't recall where the machine was located. Had I had gear for 2-meter FM back then I might better recall those details.

Back then, there were not commercially available 2-meter FM rigs. You had to convert recycled VHF commercial gear from police and fire departments, from taxi companies and the like to get on 2m FM.

When in the early 1970s, the MVARA finally decided to put a repeater on the air on 146.31MHz/146.91 MHz, we decided to go big! We obtained permission to put the main machine in an old, abandoned block house at the by then, abandoned Brookfield, Ohio Nike anti-aircraft missile gap-filler radar base on Route 7 north of Hubbard. (This radar base is a story in itself which can be told at a later date.) This site is the highest point in Trumbull County and was indeed a perfect site for a 2m repeater.

The repeater antenna was mounted inside the radome at the top of the last remaining radar tower on the base property. A 30' piece of Dill tower was lashed to the frozen radar antenna and was set to protrude through the maintenance hatch on the radome's top, so the 2m and 70 cm antennas were in the clear. From the catwalk that ran around the radome base you could easily see Sharon, PA, Brookfield, Warren, and the north side of Youngstown. On all compass headings from that radar tower the surrounding land fell away to lower elevations.

Then we built the .31/.91 machine into a multi-site monster. Beside the 2m input at the main site in Brookfield, we had inputs in New Wilmington, PA, at Bill Wallace's radio shop, downtown Warren atop a senior high rise living center and in Boardman at Dave Kaiser's K8DYX (SK) Radio and TV store near the intersection of Route 224 and Market Street, State Route 7. Each of these remote 2m inputs was linked to Brookfield by UHF commercial surplus transmitters moved into the amateur 70cm band. At Brookfield an analog voting system patched the loudest, i.e. most quieting received input signal into the repeater. This provided for excellent coverage of the tri-county area.

All of the equipment was vacuum tube based and not solid-state, except for the controller and the voting equipment. The system worked very well but quickly came to be a maintenance nightmare. Between the heat of the vacuum tubes and lightning during storm season we were always repairing something. The MVARA soon tired of footing the repair bills. The repair labor was free, but the parts were not, and maintenance costs were high.

Eventually, MVARA decided to divest themselves from this machine and its expense. This led to the repeater committee quickly forming the MVRA i.e. the Mahoning Valley Repeater Association, this group then took over operation of the .31/.91 machine. Soon the MVRA was able to secure an antenna spot on the WFMJ TV tower on Youngstown's south side. My cousin had married the daughter of Larry Oleson, the chief engineer of TV at WFMJ at that time. That relationship was the key to MVRA getting a spot on WFMJ's tower. A single site repeater was installed at WFMJ, and the multi-site .31/.91 repeater was dismantled. The MVRA operated at that site for several years before merging

with the Liberty Repeater Association, the group that ran the 147.00 machine at that time.

The MVARA and MVRA repeater committee referred to above included: Joe Schultz WB8GVB (SK), Art Lewis WA8VSJ, Bill Wallace K3SVO (SK), John Kizar K8AJR (SK), Dick Kaulbach W3QZH (SK), Dave Kaiser K8DYX (SK), Dan Cross W8FBE, and yours truly Andy Brincko WA8ZLK. There were, I am certain, a few others who lent a hand from time -to-time in keeping things going. But the years have...

Amateur License Refresher

It's probably been a while 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 is tasked by Part 97 with maintaining the pools of questions for all US amateur license examinations?

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

General Pool

G4D01

What is the purpose of a speech processor in a transceiver?

- A. Increase the apparent loudness of transmitted voice signals
- B. Increase transmitter bass response for more natural-sounding SSB signals
- C. Prevent distortion of voice signals
- D. Decrease high-frequency voice output to prevent out-of-band operation

G4D02

How does a speech processor affect a single sideband phone signal?

- A. It increases peak power
- B. It increases average power
- C. It reduces harmonic distortion
- D. It reduces intermodulation distortion

E1E01
(A)
E1E02
(C)
G4D01
(A)

Meet Our New Members

We recently emailed folks that joined MVARA since July asking for a little background information and what they would like to see at the club in 2025. We heard from several and they were introduced in the December 2024 issue. Since then we have heard from several more and they provided the following. If we missed emailing you, please drop us a note at mvara.w8qly@gmail.com.

John Hartman KF8BGV. I was part of the MVARA's 2024 technician class. I got interested in amateur radio as a youngster when I would listen to one of my neighbors operate CW. Field Day gave me an opportunity to help set up and operate a high frequency station. It was a good time and I learned some new stuff at the MetroParks Farm. Parks on the air was another enjoyable event. These activities are very interesting. It would be helpful if I could bring out my rigs to a club activity and work with other members to learn how to tweak them for optimum performance. I'm looking forward to setting up a mobile station I can use for going off road and getting involved with emergency communication.



Renee McCallister KF8BEI. I started recently in ham radio when the AT&T outage happened, and a friend wanted to have a back-up way to communicate with relatives from out-of-state. So, we decided together to get our ham radio licenses. I took the technician course on HamRadioPrep.com along with getting all the support and knowledge from the MVARA guys on weekly zoom meetings. After passing the technician license test, I went on to get my General license in the same way (as highly recommend to do right away). I'm very glad I took that advice because of all the band access I now have.

My interest now is to become a "trained communicator" to become involved with some type of emergency communications. I also find Morse Code very interesting, but that's way down the road for me. I am also interested in the

club doing something like have an old ham/new ham day. They would get partnered up or put in a small group to be able to ask questions and share knowledge.

(Hey Scott, lets add this to our goals for 2025!! -ed)

Welcome aboard to all our new members, it's such a thrill to see the new faces and interests. Please don't hesitate to ask if there is something we can help you with.

This is also a good time to mention that the club has several loaner HF radios available to members for temporary use. They include a power supply and external antenna tuner if the radio does not have it internally. Most also come with a multiband dipole antenna. Drop us a note to mvara.w8qly@gmail.com if you are interested in using one of the radios.

Meet Our Long Time Members

After starting the New Member article last month, someone suggested "well what about our existing members that have been with the club a long time?" Good point, so we emailed several of our long time members asking for recollections and highlights. Here are some we heard from.

Andy Brincko. I was first licensed as WN8UZR in my freshman year of high school that would have been the 1965-66 school year. In the 67-68 school year I passed my Tech test and became WA8ZLK. I learned to drive that summer too and got my first car in the spring of 1969. So it was the fall of 1969 that I started going to meetings, but I couldn't afford the dues until sometime in 1970 or 1971. So 70 or 71 was the beginning of my continuous membership in the MVARA.

Al Johnson. I joined the MVARA in 1977. I was secretary for several years in the 1980's. I remember doing the minutes on a Commodore 64. I was elected President in the late 80's. I was replaced as president around 1990, at which point I resumed the role of Secretary. I think I did that job for around ten years. During those years, the president was Jerry Viele, W8JV, the Treasurer was Mike Orto, WD8CSN. I don't remember who the vice president(s) were. Although I haven't been active recently, I enjoyed working events including Field Days, various walks and races, hamfests, license classes, and VE testing.

(Al helped with many of the MVARA classes in the 90's and he was one of the instructors when I took the MVARA Tech Class. -ed.)

Upcoming Contests and QSO Parties

Dave Fairbanks N8NB

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

<http://www.contestcalendar.com> .

± AGB New Year Snowball Contest	0000Z-0100Z, Jan 1
± VHF-UHF FT8 Activity Contest	1700Z-2100Z, Jan 1
± Walk for the Bacon QRP Contest	0000Z-0100Z, Jan 2 and 0200Z-0300Z, Jan 3
± ARRL Kids Day	1800Z-2359Z, Jan 4
± ARRL RTTY Roundup	1800Z, Jan 4 to 2400Z, Jan 5
± EUCW 160m Contest	2000Z-2300Z, Jan 4 and 0400Z-0700Z, Jan 5
± North American QSO Party, CW	1800Z, Jan 11 to 0559Z, Jan 12
± 4 States QRP Group Second Sunday Sprint	0100Z-0300Z, Jan 13
± AWA Linc Cundall Memorial CW Contest	2300Z, Jan 15 to 2300Z, Jan 16 and 2300Z, Jan 18 to 2300Z, Jan 19
± NAQCC CW Sprint	0130Z-0330Z, Jan 16
± NA Collegiate Championship, SSB	1800Z, Jan 18 to 0559Z, Jan 19
± North American QSO Party, SSB	1800Z, Jan 18 to 0559Z, Jan 19
± ARRL January VHF Contest	1900Z, Jan 18 to 0359Z, Jan 20
± NAQCC CW Sprint	0130Z-0330Z, Jan 23
± CQ 160-Meter Contest, CW	2200Z, Jan 24 to 2200Z, Jan 26
± Winter Field Day	1600Z, Jan 25 to 2159Z, Jan 26

Credit for the below information and further information on these operations and others can be found at the following website:

<http://www.ng3k.com>

2025 Jan01	2025 Feb08	Guyana	8R1TM	LoTW	425DXN 20241220
2025 Jan04	2025 Jan05	Gambia	C5RK	EA7FTR	425DXN 20241220
2025 Jan05	2025 Jan12	Honduras	HR9	LoTW	TDDX 20241222
2025 Jan05	2025 Jan13	Maldives	8Q7FX <small>NEW</small>	DO4FX (B/d)	DXW.Net 20241230
2025 Jan05	2025 Jan13	Maldives	8Q7XF <small>NEW</small>	DF3XY (B/d)	OPDX 20241230
2025 Jan06	2025 Jan25	Honduras	VE3VSM <small>NEW</small>	LoTW	OPDX 20241230
2025 Jan09	2025 Jan26	Guadeloupe	FG <small>NEW</small>	LoTW	DXW.Net 20241227
2025 Jan10	2025 Jan31	Benin	TY5C	LoTW	425DXN 20241220
2025 Jan11	2025 Jan12	Senegal	6W1RD	EA7FTR	DXW.Net 20231014
2025 Jan12	2025 Jan15	American Samoa	KH8	LoTW	DXW.Net 20241210
2025 Jan12	2025 Jan27	Marquesas	TX7N	LoTW	TDDX 20240902
2025 Jan12	2025 Jan31	Curacao	PJ2 <small>NEW</small>	LoTW	DXW.Net 20241230
2025 Jan18	2025 Jan28	Aruba	P40AA	Club Log OQRS	DL4MM 20241208
2025 Jan19	2025 Jan27	Martinique	FM	EB7DX	DXW.Net 20231216
2025 Jan21	2025 Feb03	St Helena	ZD7DPX	IK2DUW	DXW.Net

					20241221
2025 Jan23	2025 Jan26	Turks & Caicos	VP5	LoTW	DXW.Net 20241210
2025 Jan27	2025 Feb15	Rwanda	9X2AW	LoTW	DXW.Net 20241223
2025 Jan28	2025 Feb02	Turks & Caicos	VP5	LoTW	TDDX 20241222

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The **VOICE COIL** is the monthly publication of the Mahoning Valley Amateur Radio Association, Inc. (MVARA) and is intended to present news, issues and opinions of interest to MVARA members and the Amateur Radio Community. We encourage contributions of articles, letters to the editor, etc. and welcome newsletter exchanges with other clubs from around the country and around the world. Permission is granted to reprint material contained herein as long as proper credit is given to this newsletter and the author. Ideas for and contributions to the VOICE COIL should be submitted to: mvara.w8qly@gmail.com

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--you don't need to be an MVARA member. You can include a picture for your listing. Please submit your list to mvara.w8qly@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 we are notified otherwise.

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 members. Contact Nancy, nanceanne34@gmail.com for 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 - 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.

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