April 2026

2026 Issue 4

Mount Vernon Amateur Radio Club

CQ CQ CQ

Inside this issue

Presidents Message. 2
Meeting Minutes 4
Radio Activity 6
Meeting Invitation 9
ARES 10
Training Schedule 12
Open House Photos 13
Adventures in Ham Radio 15
Misc. Rambling 19
Final Takeaway 20

MVARC ARES Sunday Night Net

Mount Vernon 146.790 MHz Repeater

Check-in starts at 9:00 pm

Unable to access the repeater from your location?

We are on IRLP (EchoLink) K8EEN-R Node 80980

Presidents Message

Roger, KE8ICI

Greetings All, Welcome to Spring,

XWow it has been very interesting these last couple of weeks with our weather. Some of the club members suffered some major damage at their QTH on Thursday, March 12 from the windstorm that hit us that afternoon. I checked the wind speed for the state of Ohio and the Mount Vernon area, and our area had some of the highest gusts in the state at 66 MPH. I was walking out to my barn, and one gust almost took me off my feet, it was quite impressive.

I had a contractor stop at the house after seeing me up on the roof replacing shingles and ask me why I didn't turn in a claim for the damage to the insurance company. I would encourage you all to check your homeowner coverage for wind and hail damage for your roof because the coverage with my policy has changed drastically in the last couple of years. I have a one-thousand-dollar deductible on my policy, BUT and I mean BUT, for roof or hail damage they have changed that coverage from the one-thousand-dollar deductible to a percentage of the policy's face value of your home. So, let's say you have $350,000 policy on your home, the coverage amount is now 1% of the policy face amount, so 1% of $350,000 is $3500 dollars. I just put my ladder up on the roof and fixed it myself.

Below is some of the damage that incurred in the wind storm on the 12th of March, the picture of the motor home belongs to Ralph (KC8REB) and he stated that he thinks that it is a total loss and the other picture is my barn roof not too awful bad but it is a very difficult place to reach. That portion of the barn is a 16/12 pitch and unless you have wings you need to get a ladder with a standoff at the top to push you out far enough to clear the bottom section. I have done this before and have all the items I needed to get up to the damaged area and patch in some replacement shingles. The only other damage that I know about was Don (W8PEN) had a tree or branch come down on his Spectrum internet cable and took down EchoLink for a couple of days.

Now on a more positive note, the storms that have been occurring in our area lately, our ARES coordinator Tony (KE8OOE) is doing an outstanding job opening up the Weather Net on the 146.790 MHz repeater and tracking the storms around the area and passing along information to the group and keeping us up to date on the location and direction of the storms. He is cataloging damage and hail sizes then passing the information on to the National Weather Service.

The number of net check-ins was impressive in regards to the tornado warning that occurred Thursday night (the 26th). It goes to show what a great asset the repeater is to the group, and even though there was minimal damage from that storm the next one could result in a much worse situation and with the help of the group it may save someone's life. I just want to thank all of you for participating and I hope that we can continue to be an asset to our community if we ever experience a disaster!

The next scheduled club event is NVIS Day on April 25th. This marks another significant event in the Ohio Section, NVIS Antenna Day. As you are aware, this day presents an opportunity for enthusiasts to gather and evaluate their antenna configurations. Kicking off at 10:00 am, this event is not a formal competition. Its primary objective is to simultaneously engage multiple counties in Ohio, testing their antennas and facilitating communications among them. It is usually cold and windy at the parks so I would advise that you come prepared.

The first week of May is the Black Fork Gravel Grinder and there are three route lengths offered: **the Ride** (23 mile), **the Original** (30 mile) and **the Race** (53 mile). The club used to set up antennas for the 146.790 MHz repeater due to poor cell phone reception down in that area, but even using the repeater and cross band communications we also had issues getting through to emergency services to help riders in distress. The race is on May 2nd and starts at 10:00 am at Mohican Wilderness Campground located at 22462 Wally Road Glenmont, Ohio. We will be using the MARCS radios provide by Arlin Bradford (KD8EVR). If anyone would like to volunteer to participate just let me know. We will be meeting at the Star/Finish on Wally Road around 8:00 am and then we can determine who will go to what locations and set up. This is not a club event, but it is an interesting experience and there will be a meal offered to volunteers after the race ends.

Just a reminder that the meeting time is moving back to Monday evenings, the date for the April meeting is April 13, 2026, at 7:00 pm at the club house so if you come on Saturday morning you might be all by yourself. Just remember to be safe out there and HAM it Up!

That's all for now! 73

Meeting Minutes

Darlene, WS8W

Call to Order

The March 2026 meeting of the Mount Vernon Amateur Radio Club was called to order by President Roger, KE8ICI at 10:00 am. There were 14 members in attendance.

Minutes of the Last Meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved as presented in the Club Newsletter without objection.

Treasurers Report

Terry, KI8N provided an account of the current balance of all bank accounts including deposits and expenditures of all bank accounts through February 28, 2026. There were no additions or corrections, and the report was approved as presented. IRS and Ohio Charitable Filing is done for 2025.

No questions or concerns were raised.

Committee Reports

- **Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES)**

  Roger, KE8ICI presented information relayed to him by Tony, KE8OE:

  - Ohio Severe Weather Awareness Week is March 15-21, 2026, with a Tornado Drill on Wednesday, March 18th.
  - Tony will monitor the Ohio net and requested that someone open our net. The repeater code to open our net is on the Members Only page.

- **American Radio Relay League (ARRL)**

  Scott, N8SY was not present, so there is no ARRL report.

- **Repeater**

  Roger, KE8ICI reported on several Repeater related topics:

  - The duplexers are as VASU now. They will work on them as time permits.
  - Don Bunner, KB8QPO volunteered to interface with John at VASU and transport equipment when necessary.
  - Need to change the contact number for the repeater from Steve to a club member.
  - Steve no longer has any club equipment.
  - The time on the repeater has been corrected.
  - The repeater amplifier is installed and wired but is not turned on yet.
  - The battery back-up will power the amplifier also.

- **EchoLink**

  Don, W8PEN reported the following on EchoLink:

  - The EchoLink system is not working currently because Don's internet is down.

- **Directors**

  Frank, KC8EVS indicated that there is nothing to report from the directors this month.

  - Terry, KI8N asked about the Go-Box. Tom, KD8HSA has taken it apart. Tom and Frank will put it back together.

Old Business

- Terry, KI8N mentioned that we have two new members, thanks to the Open House held March 7th.
- Frank, KC8EVS reported that 29 total people attended (including existing club members) including the building owner and his son.
- Ben, KD8VJY commented that he liked the displays, and everyone agreed the displays and how they were set up were very good.
- Evan, KF8APC distributed the poster and it seems to have attracted a lot of people to the Open House.

Future Club Events

- Don, W8PEN is organizing a MVARC POTA Day. He is planning on a Knox County only, 2-to-4-hour club contest. Only MVARC members would be eligible for awards. Tentative date is September 5th between 1-5 pm. Contest would be for hunters only (no activators). Contestants would earn points by hunting activators and can hunt from home or mobile. Don will not be a contestant but will activate a park. Contestants can get a one-time 50-point bonus if they contact him. Don is the chairperson and requested volunteers to assist. Frank, KC8EVS and Roger, KE8ICI volunteered. This is still in the planning stages, so changes are possible.
- Roger, KE8ICI spoke to Steve regarding the Gravel Grinder. It is scheduled for May 15, 2026, and Matt Simpson is the Director. Participation is uncertain. Roger is now the contact person for MVARC. There was discussion about our participation if MARCS radios (Multi-Agency Radio Communication System) are used. The general feeling is that if MARCS radios are used, there is really no need for the club to participate as a club. Individual members, of course, can participate on their own. Roger will reach out to Arlin and get more information.
- NVIS (Near Vertical Incident Skywave) is April 25, 2026. Frank, KC8EVS plans to be at Thayer Ridge and Don, W8PEN plans to be at Wolf Run.
- Barry, N8PPF, asked about Field Day. Field Day 2026 is June 26-28, 2026. Set-up at Apple Valley is planned for Friday at 2 pm, contest starts Saturday afternoon.

Dan, ND8J won the 50/50 raffle.

Meeting adjourned, motion by Don, W8PEN and Frank, KC8EVS second.

After the meeting, Barry, N8PPF did a presentation on some older ham equipment and how to operate it.

Present at the March Club Meeting

Frank, KC8EVS	Emery, W8TW	Roger, KE8ICI
Terry, KI8N	Michael, KE8HGE	Don, W8PEN
Tom, KD8HSA	Dan, ND8J	Barry, N8PPF
Don, KB8QPO	Darlene, WS8W	Rob, KF8FXE
Nathan, KE0RYO	Ben, KD8VJY	

Radio Activity

Don Russell, W8PEN

Been a busy month of March, heading into April! Let's get to it.

MVARC Open House

Saturday, March 7, 2026, the club held an Open House event to attract new members to the club and to inform the public of our existence. I think both objectives were met.

To be honest, the committee of Frank Counts (KC8EVS), Roger Gorrell (KE8ICI), and myself did not hold out much hope for success. The club has done open houses before with very little in the way of interest.

Evan Koontz (KF8APC), our Public Relations Officer, did a very nice job getting the word out on the Open House. I posted some flyers at the Library, Gambier Post Office, and the Mt. Vernon Post Office. If anyone else posted flyers, thank you.

We were hoping that having the open house during the ARRL DX contest would spur some interest that would normally not be there. After all, the public hears about hams talking all over the world; yet here locally we never actually prove it by having Field Day, NVIS Day, Parks On the Air. These are all local stuff. So, we thought showing that we can work DX was worth giving a try.

We also decided that setting up equipment displays would be a great idea, so we asked for display donations. Don Bunner (KB8QPO) came through big time for us, allowing us to set up his old Drake Line of HF and VHF equipment. This included Power Supplies, Speakers, Antenna Tuners, Transceivers, and a matched Transmitter and Receiver set. Others that put-on equipment displays were Frank Counts (KC8EVS) with his Icom IC-7300 and IC-705 and a Yaesu VX-8 handheld. Not to be outdone too much, I put on display my Icom IC-7100, Yaesu FT-817 QRP rig, a Yaesu fusion handheld, and a Baofeng handheld.

I also built a few home brew straight keys for Morse Code that I thought were neat. Plus, we set up the club's Kenwood TS-570D.

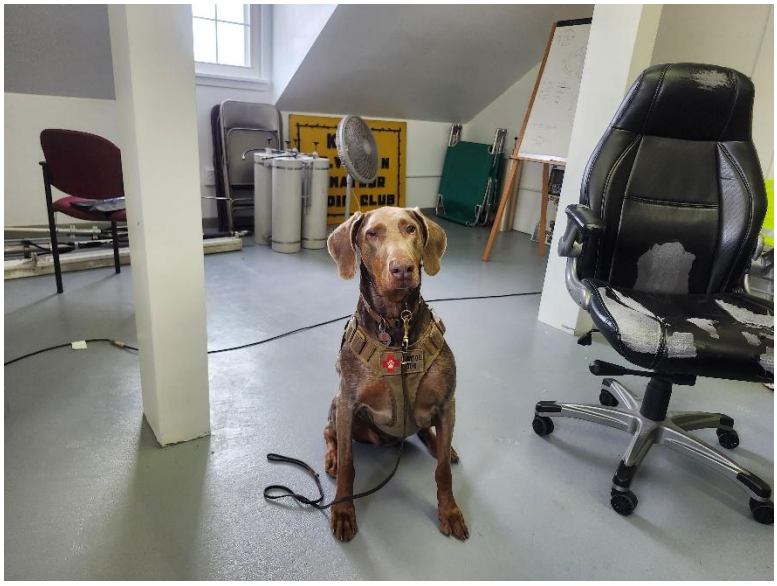
We had antennas set up so that the newer equipment could receive signals. The Drake stuff needs to be worked on, so we didn't turn them on, but they were at least clean on the outside and provided

a very impressive display.

I wrote up a fact sheet on each one of the equipment on display, a little history of Morse Code, and a few other items. I thought it went well.

The group took turns showing guests around. My thanks to Darlene Pudlinski (WS8W), Emery Bennett (W8TW), Frank Counts (KC8EVS), and Roger Gorrell (KC8ICI) for doing escort services.

End results were a couple of new members and several people interested in taking our class run by Michael Jacobs (KE8HGE).



The above picture was our first customer. Being limited to barking and growling, he wants to learn Morse Code. Check out the other pictures elsewhere in this newsletter.

MVARC HUNTERS' DAY

Now that the Open House was a success, I was looking for something else interesting to work on. I thought of something that might be a lot of fun for club members. I call it MVARC Hunters Day.

It is sort of a contest. We keep score. But the main idea is for club members to work as many POTA stations as possible that are activating parks. To make it as attractive as possible to the busy ham, the event will be planned for either a two hour or four-hour event.

I have created a set of rules, a logging sheet, and a contest summary sheet.

To give members an idea, here are the first few paragraphs of the contest rules. A complete set of rules will be published in the June Newsletter to give club members time to plan.

Excerpt from the rules for MVARC Hunters Day:

MVARC Hunters Day

A friendly, fast-paced POTA-based operating challenge for Mt. Vernon Amateur Radio Club members

1. Purpose

MVARC Hunters Day is a short, high-energy event designed to:

- Encourage on-air activity
- Build familiarity with the POTA program
- Strengthen club camaraderie
- Provide a fun, low-pressure contest for all skill levels

All licensed amateurs in **Knox County** *may participate, but* **only MVARC members** *are eligible for awards and standings.*

2. Event Window

- **Saturday, September 5, 2026,**
- **Saturday, 1700 UTC - 2100 UTC**
- *All QSOs must occur within the official window.*

3. Eligible Contacts

Participants earn points by **hunting POTA activators**. A valid contact must:

- Be a two-way QSO with a POTA activator anywhere in the world
- A valid QSO will be the same as used in the POTA program
- Park number may be retrieved from POTA stopping, but must be in the log
- Follow all FCC and POTA rules

Any band, any mode allowed.

Note that I have originally scheduled this contest for four hours. It may be changed to two hours.

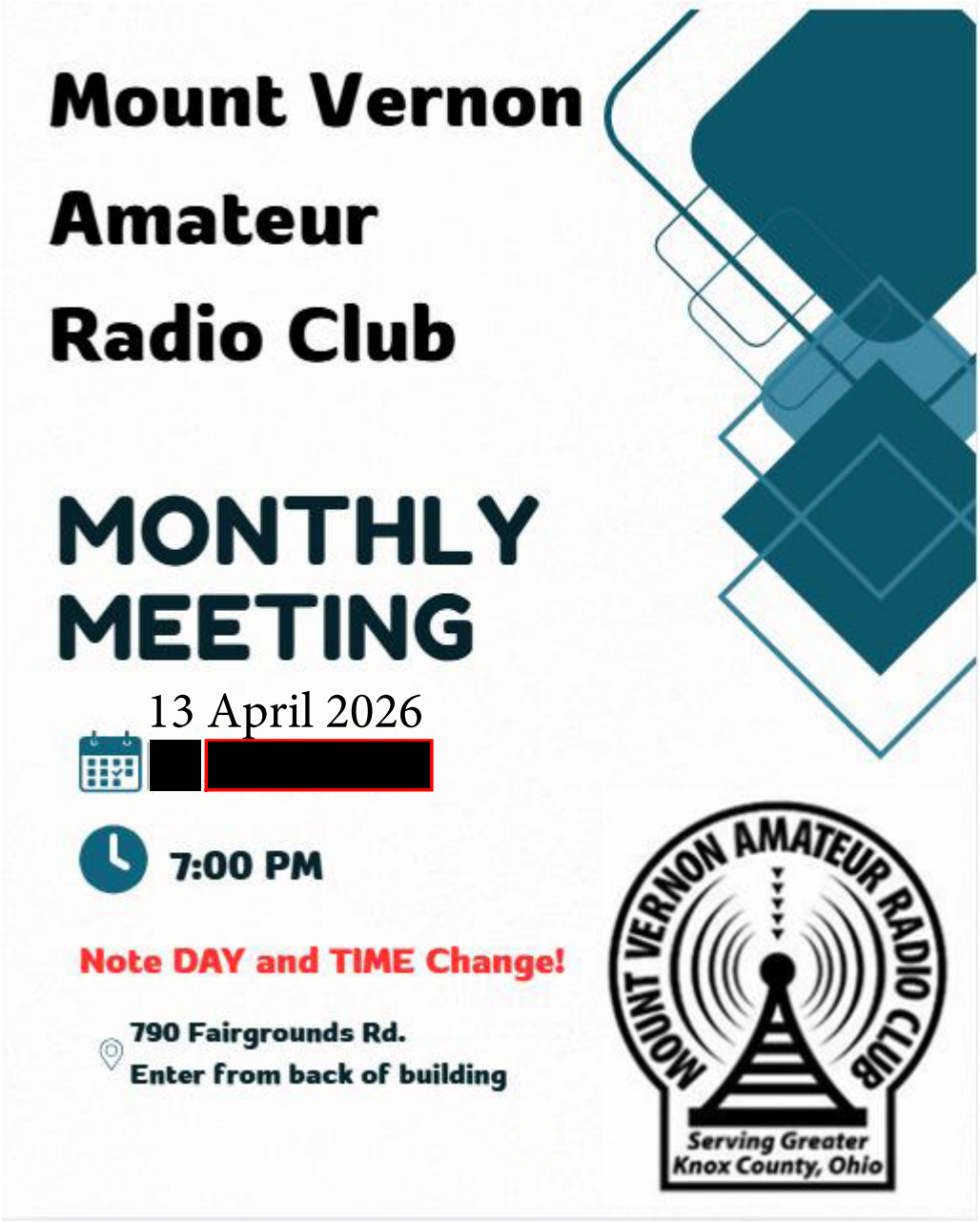
We talked about this contest at the March meeting, and I think everyone was interested in it.

EchoLink

The EchoLink system has been working incredibly well for the past month or so. Except for the windstorm we had a few weeks ago. This storm knocked my power out for three days. It also knocked the internet cables down and I was without internet for five days.

Since EchoLink relies on the EchoLink Proxy I created at home, EchoLink was down for those five days. Not much we could do about it.

Things are back online and working exceptionally well again.


Mount Vernon
Amateur
Radio Club
MONTHLY
MEETING
13 April 2026
[redacted]
7:00 PM
Note DAY and TIME Change!
790 Fairgrounds Rd.
Enter from back of building
MOUNT VERNON AMATEUR RADIO CLUB
Serving Greater
Knox County, Ohio

ARES

Tony, KE8OOE – Knox County EC

Thunderstorm Season Preparedness for Amateur Radio Operators

As we head into spring and summer, thunderstorm season arrives across much of the country. While thunderstorms are common, they can bring dangerous lightning, damaging winds, flash flooding, and even tornadoes. For Amateur Radio operators—especially those involved in ARES—this is a time when preparation and safety become critically important.

Amateur Radio has long played a role in supporting communities during severe weather events. From providing real-time storm reports to assisting emergency management with communications, our ability to operate during adverse conditions depends on preparation long before the first storm arrives.

Station Preparedness

Before the season begins, operators should take time to inspect their stations and equipment. A few preventive steps can make the difference between staying on the air or being taken off the air when communications are needed most.

Start by checking all antennas, mounts, and feed lines. Make sure antennas are secure and guy lines are tight. Inspect coaxial cables for cracks, water intrusion, or loose connectors. High winds and lightning are hard on antenna systems, so catching issues early can prevent failures later.

Grounding and lightning protection are equally important. Ensure your station has proper grounding and lightning arrestors are installed where appropriate. During severe storms, disconnecting antennas from radios can provide an additional layer of protection.

Power backup is another key part of preparedness. Many ARES operators rely on battery systems, generators, or solar power to stay on the air during outages. Test backup systems periodically and ensure batteries are charged and ready.

Personal Safety

While many of us are eager to assist during severe weather, personal safety must always come first. Lightning is one of the most dangerous hazards associated with thunderstorms. Outdoor antenna adjustments should never be attempted when storms are approaching or lightning is nearby.

If operating from a home station, ensure surge protection is in place for radios, power supplies, and computers. If deployed in the field, maintain situational awareness of weather conditions and have a safe shelter available.

Remember that no radio transmission is worth risking personal injury.

Weather Monitoring

Amateur operators are uniquely positioned to assist with weather monitoring. Many operators participate in programs such as **SKYWARN**, working with the National Weather Service to report severe weather conditions.

Operators should ensure they have reliable ways to monitor weather alerts. This might include NOAA weather radios, local repeater nets, weather radar apps, or monitoring local emergency management channels.

Accurate and timely reports from trained spotters can help meteorologists issue warnings that save lives.

Go Kits and Deployment Readiness

ARES members should maintain a ready-to-go communications kit. A good go kit may include:

- Portable radio (HT or mobile)
- Extra batteries or power supply
- Coax and portable antenna
- Headset or speaker mic
- Notebook and logging materials
- Flashlight and spare batteries
- Phone chargers and power banks

It's also wise to include basic personal supplies such as water, snacks, and weather-appropriate clothing.

Practice Before the Storm

Preparedness also means practice. Participate in local nets, emergency exercises, and simulated emergency tests (SET). These activities allow operators to become familiar with procedures, frequencies, and equipment before real emergencies occur.

ARES groups that train together are far more effective when called upon to serve their communities.

Final Thoughts

Thunderstorms are a routine part of life, but preparation ensures we can respond effectively when severe weather strikes. By maintaining equipment, practicing safe operating procedures, and staying informed about weather conditions, Amateur Radio operators remain a vital part of the emergency communications network.

Stay safe, stay prepared, always make sure you and your family are secure after a major storm event then check on your neighbors before committing to any ARES response. After any storm please report damage or downed trees or limbs to me to pass on to NWS with pics if possible and we'll see you on the air.

73

Training Class Schedule

G. Michael, KE8HGE

Sessions meet weekly on Tuesday evenings, starting at 6:30 pm.

Study Session Schedule, 2026

Session 1 - Technician	**Session 2 - General**	**Session 3 - Technician**
2/24 – 4/14	6/30 – 8/18	10/27 – 12/15
Testing 4/15	**Testing** 8/19	**Testing** 12/26

MVARC Calendar / Events

WEEKLY EVENTS

Sunday: 9:00 pm ARES Sunday Night Net

Wednesday: 4:45 pm — Dinner at Southside Restaurant

Friday: 9:00 am Breakfast—McDonalds on Newark Rd.

ARRL Sanctioned Hamfests

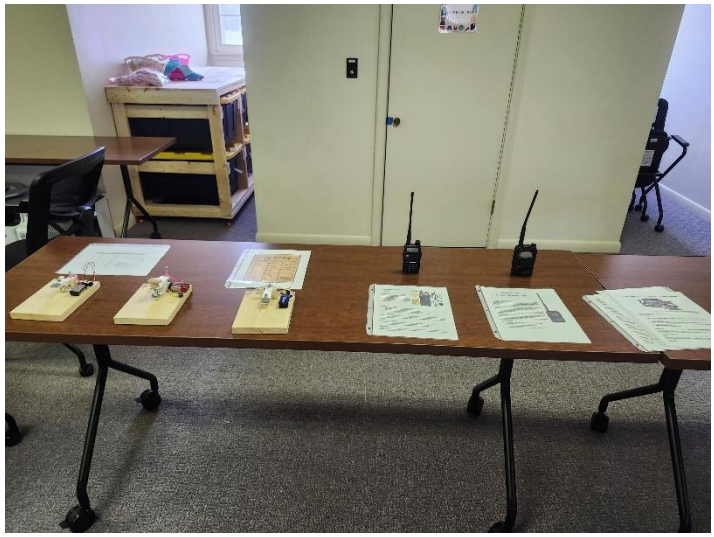
https://arrl-ohio.org/hamfests/

MVARC Open House Photos

Photos supplied by Don, W8PEN

"You know, some people say life is short and that you could get hit by a bus at any moment and that you have to live each day like it's your last. Bullshit. Life is long. You're probably not gonna get hit by a bus. And you're gonna have to live with the choices you make for the next fifty years." – **Chris Rock**

MVARC Open House Photos - Continued



MVARC Welcomes New Members

Ben McNaughton, KD8VJY
Kathleen Ridenour, N8IOJ
Rob Stambaugh, KF8FXE

We hope to see each of you and all other members at the next club meeting.

> "Nobody told you what a drag it was, getting older. Or at least, people did tell you, but you ignored them, because they were old." — **Mick Herron**, "The Secret Hours"

My Adventures in Ham Radio

Don, W8PEN

Chapter 8 – Losing the Call

Things slowed down a bit after Field Day. Summer filled itself with basketball, football, fishing, and—of course—ham radio. I made daily CW contacts, studied for my General class license, and enjoyed being away from school. I wasn't exactly a star student, so the break felt good. Maybe a little *too* good.

My Novice license was running out of time. I needed to upgrade before it expired in September or October, so I buckled down and studied. When the FCC came to Columbus, Ohio, I headed there full of confidence. A bit too full.

The 13 WPM Morse test was a breeze. The theory exam, however, was a nightmare. I wasn't prepared. I didn't pass.

I still had a little time left, so I studied harder and tried again the next time the FCC came through. Same result. That one hurt. I quit studying and let my license expire. Just like that, I went from WN8*** to "Mr. No Call."

By then I was a freshman in high school, and with all the new social activities, I didn't have much time—or motivation—to study for another license. Ham radio drifted to the back of my mind for the rest of the school year. And the next summer.

My sophomore year wasn't much different. I had a girlfriend now, and that filled my time with plenty of fun distractions. I was still disappointed about losing my license, but life had other priorities.

The following summer, the spark returned. I started thinking about ham radio again. I convinced my girlfriend to help me study by reading questions from the three different study guides I had bought. We worked through them until I had memorized every question. She was amazed. I told her simply, "I really want my ham radio license."

When testing day finally arrived, I felt ready. I took the test, and although the FCC never tells you your score, I walked out confident. I was a ham again—WA8YRS.

- ## Chapter 9 – Back on the Air

Sometime during my Novice days, I had picked up a Johnson Viking II to replace my trusty DX-35. This was one of the big boys—heavy, massive, and capable of 180 watts input power. Back then, we rated transmitters by input, not output. The Viking II could run CW or full AM modulation, and I had been eager to try AM voice before my license expired the first time. Now that I was licensed again, it was time to dust it off.

Operating voice felt great. AM was still hanging on as king, though SSB was quickly gaining ground. My receiver, unfortunately, was now the weak link in my station, but with a girlfriend in the picture, the radio budget wasn't exactly overflowing.

Still, I got on the air. After a few weeks of talking mostly to adults, interesting but not exactly thrilling, I stumbled onto two high school club stations chatting on 40 meters. One was in Michigan, the other in Indiana. They told me they got on the air most afternoons after school and invited me to join them on or near the frequency we were using.

Before long, I discovered a whole little network: another school station in Illinois and a couple of individual hams. It was a fun group.

I became especially good friends with one of them, Lynn Drown (call sign lost to time). Even after the group faded away for the summer, Lynn and I kept talking on 40 meters. Many afternoons after school we'd get on the air and talk until our moms called us for dinner. Saturdays were more of the same. Sports practice cut into my radio time, and so did my girlfriend, but Lynn and I still managed plenty of QSOs.

Lynn had his own car, and eventually he was able to drive to Mt. Vernon…

Sidebar: The Johnson Viking II — A Workhorse of the AM Era

The Johnson Viking II was one of those transmitters that defined an era—big, bold, and unmistakably *serious* about getting a clean AM signal on the air. Introduced in the mid-1950s by E.F. Johnson, the Viking II quickly became a favorite among hams who wanted broadcast-quality audio and rock-solid reliability without needing a broadcast engineer's budget.

What made it special

- **Power You Could Count On:**

The Viking II delivered a solid 120 watts of AM carrier (and even more on CW), thanks to a pair of 6146 finals. For many hams, this was their first step into "real" AM—signals that could punch through noise and be heard across the county or across the country.

- **Stable VFO or Crystal Control:**

Johnson's 122 VFO paired beautifully with the Viking II, giving smooth, stable frequency control. But if you preferred rock-solid precision, the rig also supported crystal control—perfect for nets or skeds.

- **Classic Johnson Build Quality:**

Heavy steel cabinet, generous ventilation, and a layout that made sense. You didn't just operate a Viking II—you *maintained* it. Tubes were accessible, components were oversized, and the whole thing felt like it was built to outlive its owner.

The sound of the ’50s and ’60s

The Viking II earned a reputation for warm, full AM audio. With a good microphone and a little attention to modulation, you could produce audio that rivaled local AM broadcast stations. Many hams still run them today for vintage AM nets, and they continue to sound fantastic.

A tinkerer’s dream

Like most rigs of its era, the Viking II invited experimentation:

- Audio mods
- Improved cooling
- VFO stabilization tweaks
- Cosmetic restorations

It was a rig you could *work on*—and many hams did.

A transmitter that stayed with you

For countless operators, the Viking II was their first “big iron” transmitter. It wasn’t just a piece of gear—it was a rite of passage. You learned about plate tuning, loading, neutralization, and the unmistakable glow of tubes warming the shack on a winter night.

Even today, when someone fires up a Viking II on 75-meter AM, you can hear that unmistakable Johnson signature: warm, authoritative, and full of history.

Sidebar: The Johnson 122 VFO — Stability for the AM and CW Operator

If the Viking II was the muscle, the Johnson 122 VFO was the finesse. Introduced as the ideal frequency control companion for Johnson’s AM transmitters, the 122 quickly became a staple on the benches of serious operators who wanted smooth, stable tuning without the limitations of crystal control.

Why the 122 VFO Mattered

- **Freedom from crystals:**

  In the 1950s, crystals weren’t cheap, and you needed a whole drawer full if you wanted to roam the bands. The 122 VFO opened up the dial, letting operators slide anywhere within the band with ease.

- **Rock-solid stability (for its day):**

  With a well-designed temperature-compensated oscillator and a rugged enclosure, the 122 offered impressive stability once warmed up. Many hams still swear by its “drift-then-lock” behavior: give it 20 minutes, and it would sit like a rock.

- **Perfect match for the Viking line:**

  The 122 wasn’t just electrically compatible — it *looked* right sitting next to a Viking I or II. Same styling, same heft, same unmistakable Johnson presence on the operating desk.

Inside the Box

The 122 used a classic tube-based oscillator and buffer chain, with generous shielding to keep RF where it belonged. The dial mechanism was smooth and precise, giving operators a sense of control that crystal rigs simply couldn't match.

It covered:

- 160 meters
- 80 meters
- 40 meters
- 20 meters
- 15 meters
- 10 meters

—making it a true all-band companion for the AM and CW operator.

The Sound of Vintage Operating

Pair a Viking II with a 122 VFO and you had a station that felt alive. The warm glow of tubes, the gentle drift settling into stability, the tactile feel of the dial — it was radio you *experienced*, not just operated.

A favorite of restorers

Today, the 122 VFO remains a popular restoration project:

- Recapping
- Rebuilding the dial mechanism
- Improving shielding
- Replacing drift-prone components

Many vintage AM enthusiasts still run them on the air, often paired with the same Viking transmitters they were designed for nearly 70 years ago.

As small box with a big legacy

The Johnson 122 VFO didn't just free operators from crystals — it helped define the sound and style of mid-century amateur radio. For many hams, it was their first taste of true frequency agility, and it remains a beloved piece of classic station gear.

"Preparedness also means practice." **Tony**, KE8OOE

Miscellaneous Rambling

Terry, KI8N

Roger mentioned the storm on the 12th, and while we did not experience any roof issues one of our pine trees blew over, my 160-meter OCF dipole came down, and we lost power for about 36 hours. Nothing major, just mostly inconvenient.

When I got around to looking at the dipole antenna what I found was the 14-gauge wire had broken at the balun which is suspended 50' up on the tower. I found the broken 180' wire laying in the back yard still tied to the tree it is mounted to at the back of the lot. However, upon inspecting the wire it appeared to have stretched, and the insulation was severely cracked. Easy enough, I will just buy new 14-gauge THHN insulated wire and rebuild that end of the antenna. At least that is what I thought until I found Lowes and Menard's both want $134 for a 500' spool.

That is more than double what I paid for the original 500' spool several years ago. Then the question was, could I reuse the existing wire and hope it worked? But first, I went to Amazon to see if there was a less costly type of THHN insulated wire. Amazingly enough some seller had a close out sale on a 500' spool of 14-gauge THHN wire for $66. Ordered and received a couple of days later.

I cut a 180' section and tied it to the insulator then soldered the other end to the balun which I had lowered from its location. Next up was fishing it over the pine trees behind the tower, raising the balun, and then pulling the wire back up with the previously used support line. Finally, checked it with the antenna analyzer and deemed it fit to use. So far about 75 contacts with the repaired OCF dipole.

I have been doing yard work since the weather warmed up. Cleaned a couple of flower beds of weeds and a patch of poison ivy. I also cleaned under the pine trees in the back since these unwanted sucker trees start to grow inside the low hanging pine branches. I can also say I found my first couple of brown garter snakes under the pine branches curled up in the sun. I was crawling under the pine tree limbs when I almost put my hand down where they were. I am not a fan of snakes and these two were curled up together, probably they were chilled, scared the desire to continue out of me. I poked them with a yard rake; I did not kill them; to get them to move to a different location so I could get the last small sucker tree cut down. One of the garter snakes was about 18" and the other was closer to 12". Next yard activity, when the weather allows, is to cut up the downed pine tree and haul it back to the burn pile.

In March I attended the Elyria hamfest with Brett, KD8SCL and Scott, N8SY. I noticed lately most hamfests are experiencing a decline in attendance and vendors. This hamfest was lightly attended and I left early. On the way home, I did two successful POTA activations, one at Findley State Park and the other at Wellington State Wildlife Area.

We all owe Don, W8PEN a big thank you for putting together the MVARC open house. Also, Evan, KF8APC and Scott, N8SY for getting the word out about the event through social media, radio, and community postings. There were quite a few people from the community that attended and we gained three new members: Ben, KD8VJY, Kathleen, N8OIJ, and Rob, KF8FXE.

One last thing, I spent some time this month trying to come up with a new newsletter template to change things up. However, this was the most frustrating thing I have done with Word in several years. I watched videos and read web pages on how to make a new custom Word template and save it. So, I gave it a try, and I was able to save a template, but the silly thing would never keep its formatting, things moved every time I added or changed anything on a page and generally kept me ranting the entire time I was trying to put the newsletter articles into it. So, there is not much change this month, but I intend to keep trying, the templates available online all seem to work correctly or until I try to make visual and layout changes.

That's it for this month. See you at the meeting on Monday the 14th. "Stay safe and continue radioing!" 73

Final Takeaway

Emergency Communications Basics – Final Installment

This series ends with a checklist to assist you in preparing for emergency radio communications. You must be mentally and operationally prepared when called up. You must have your personal items and equipment readily available. I have enjoyed providing this series of articles and need your assistance with the next topic.

Ham Radio Survival Checklist

1. Core Communications (Absolute Priority)

   Primary radio (HF or VHF/UHF depending on plan)

   Backup radio (HT or spare mobile)

   Programming cable (radio ↔ laptop/phone)

   Printed frequency list (local, regional, emergency)

   Printed repeater list (offsets, tones)

   Headset or earbud (hands-free, noise reduction)

   External speaker or speaker-mic

2. Power and Energy (Failure Point #1)

   Primary battery (fully charged)

   Spare battery (≥ 2 if HT)

   Battery charger (AC + DC if possible)

   Powerpole adapters & fuses

   USB → radio power cable (if supported)

   Solar panel (20–100W) and charge controller

   Power meter or voltmeter

3. Antennas (More Important Than Power)

   Primary antenna (portable vertical or wire)

   Secondary antenna (different band/polarization)

   Ensure your antennas have been checked and operated on the air in preparation for deployment.

   50–100 ft antenna wire (18–22 AWG)

   Coax (25–50 ft) + spare coax

   Adapters (PL-259, SO-239, BNC, SMA)

   Antenna tuner (manual preferred)

   Paracord / throw line

   Insulators (or improvised substitutes)

4. Frequencies and Operating References

   Emergency calling frequencies (HF/VHF)

   Local simplex frequencies

   Regional HF NVIS frequencies

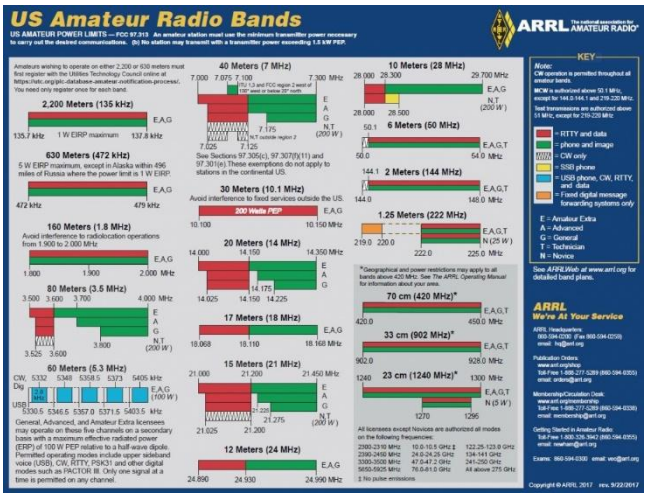
   Weather frequencies

   Net schedules (ARES/RACES/etc.)

   Band plan printout

   Phonetic alphabet card

   Message format template (ICS-213 or similar)



5. Information and Intelligence

   NOAA weather radio or receive-only scanner

   Shortwave listening capability

   Notebook + pencil (pen fails when wet)

   Local map with elevation/terrain

   Time reference (watch set to UTC)

6. Field Deployment and Protection

   Go-bag or hard case

   Waterproof bags (radio + batteries)

   Electrical tape + duct tape

   Multitool

   Spare fuses

   Zip ties

Gloves (antenna wire handling)

Headlamp or flashlight (red mode preferred)

7. OPSEC and Survival Discipline

    Callsign written clearly

    Pre-planned contact schedule

    Pre-planned frequencies

    Code words or brevity plan (legal, non-encrypted)

    “Do NOT transmit” reminders (location, supplies, names)

8. Redundancy and Failover

    Ability to operate without repeater

    Ability to operate without commercial power

    Ability to operate without tuner

    Ability to operate without laptop/phone

    Paper logs only (no digital dependency)

9. Skills Checklist (If You Can’t Do These, Gear Won’t Save You)

    Tune an antenna by ear/SWR

    Set up antenna in <15 minutes

    Operate radio without a manual

    Manually program your VHF/UHF radio

        Know how to program your radio without the manual.

    Pass a formal message accurately

    Operate under low power (QRP)

    Maintain radio discipline under stress

10. Quick Reality Check (Read Before Packing)

    Antenna > DC Power > Radio

    Height beats watts

    Simple beats complex

    Paper beats digital in disasters

    Practice beats prep

11. Personal Items

    Attitude

        Probably the most important item. If you are not in the right frame of mind your deployment will not go smoothly and will reflect on the group.

Extra clothing – dress in layers in case weather changes

You will not know where you may be deployed and it could be in an open shelter susceptible to heat, cold, wind, or wet.

Water

Available water at a shelter is going to be mostly for the people/families taking shelter and experiencing trauma or other issues.

Snacks

Never assume food/snacks will be available for you and you will require some sustenance to keep you alert throughout the deployment.

Blanket

May be needed for warmth or for resting when you get the chance.

ARRL Sanctioned Hamfests

https://arrl-ohio.org/hamfests/

2026 Upcoming MVARC Events

NVIS Day	April 25
ARRL Field Day	June 26-28
Mount Vernon First Friday	August 7
OSPOTA	September 12
Centerburg Old Time Farm Festival	September 26-27
Club POTA	TBD

Ham Radio Contest Calendar

https://www.contestcalendar.com/

"If you lose your integrity, you will also lose your identity, your sensitivity and your dignity. Integrity is honesty, modesty and security in all kinds of weather. It should be our priority!"
— **Israelmore Ayivor**

MVARC 2026 Club Officers

President	Roger Gorrell, KE8ICI
Vice President	G. Michael Jacobs, KE8HGE
Secretary	Darlene Pudlinski, WS8W
Treasurer	Terry Windsor, KI8N
PIO	Evan Koontz, KF8APC
Chairman of Directors	Frank Counts, KC8EVS
Director	Barry Butz, N8PPF
Director	Emery Bennett, W8TW
Director	Scott Yonally, N8SY
Director	Evan Koontz, KF8APC

The MVARC CQ Newsletter is delivered to club members via email containing a link to the MVARC webpage, Newsletters button.

** MVARC CQ is the official newsletter of the Mount Vernon Amateur Radio Club. **

Contact Us

Mailing Address

Mount Vernon Amateur Radio Club
812 Coshocton Ave.
PMB #145
Mount Vernon, OH 43050

Web Page

mvarc.net

Facebook Page

https://www.facebook.com/mvarc

MVARC Email

admin@mvarc.net