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September 2007



NORTHERN KENTUCKY AMATEUR RADIO CLUB

# The Feedline



Photo of the NKARC 147.375 Walton repeater, undergoing repairs in the shop of Harold Blocher (W4YWH) earlier this year. Photo by Tony White, AI4IP. Additional photos on page 3.

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#### Dates to Remember:

- Sep 10 – Membership Meeting
- Oct 8 – Membership Meeting

# NKARC Directory

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## Repeaters — K4CO

147.255+ and 444.350+ Edgewood (PL 123.0), 147.375+ Walton, 146.895+ Highland Heights  
The 147.255 repeater is a linked Echolink node, accessible via N4IJS-R.

## Nets

N. KY. Amateur Club Net: Tuesdays, 7:30 PM on the 147.255 repeater

## —WEB Site—

<http://www.k4co.org>

**Membership meetings** on the **2nd Monday** at 7:30 PM, Turkeyfoot Middle School, 3230 Turkeyfoot Rd in Edgewood

**Board meetings: TBA**

The Feedline is published monthly by and for the members  
of the Northern Kentucky Amateur Radio Club.

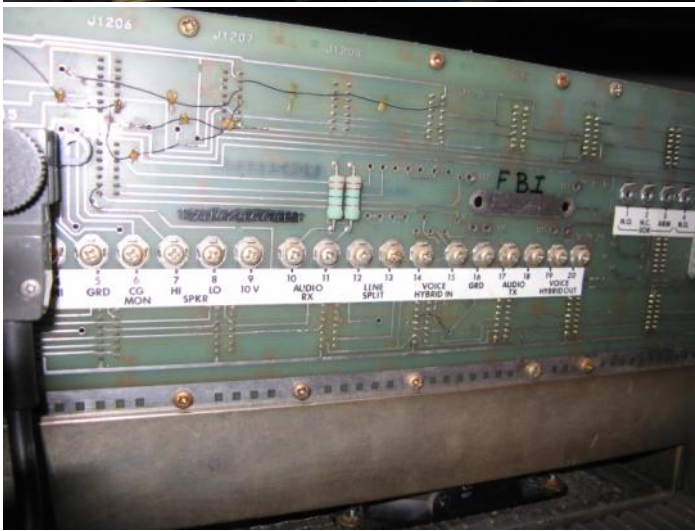
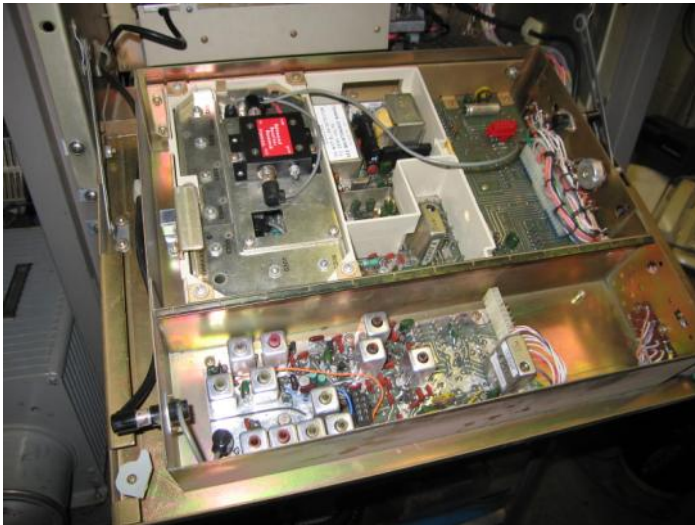
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Submissions to The Feedline must be received no later than the last Monday of the month prior to publica-  
tion. Submissions, address or call changes and circulation problems may be sent to The Feedline Editor:

Mark Volstad AI4BJ: 6098 Tosha Dr., Burlington, KY 41005 — Email: [mvolstad@fuse.net](mailto:mvolstad@fuse.net)

# Top of the Tower

Top of the Tower will return next month. Below are additional photos of the Walton 147.375 repeater.



## August Net Report

DATE	NCS	CHECKINS	TIME (MINS)	TRAFFIC
8/07/07	KI4QFL (Frank)	6	10	1
8/14/07	KB4VKS (Mike)	7	21	0
8/21/07	KG4SBG (Dennis)	7	27	0
8/28/07	KG4SBG (Dennis)	9	30	1
TOTALS		29	93	2

# Editor's Soapbox

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## The Joy of Kit-Building

The first electronic kit that I had the pleasure of building was a Heathkit AM transistor radio that my parents gave me for Christmas when I was around 11 years old. I learned many valuable lessons from that experience, including which end of a soldering iron *not* to hold! (That's a lesson I still need to re-learn every few years...) My Dad knew almost nothing about electronics, so it is a testament to the quality of the Heathkit assembly manual that the radio worked the first time I turned it on. What a thrill *that* was!

A year or two later, I saw an ad for the [American Basic Science Club](#) in a comic book, and ordered the first three kits, which dealt with vacuum-tube electronics. One of the projects you could build was a neon strobe light, which allowed you to “freeze” drops of water dripping from a tap. Way cool!

During my teens I built all manner of Radio Shack kits (remember their little red [P-box kits](#)?), including the [Globe Patrol](#) regenerative shortwave receiver.

In high school, my electronics instructor needed an oscilloscope for the school lab, so he ordered an EICO O-scope kit and let me build it for him. The thing I remember most about that kit was that it involved a ton of point-to-point wiring, which was very tedious. One of the first things I learned to do with the scope was to create [Lissajous patterns](#). To this day, I still smile when I see these on spaceship instrument panels in old sci-fi movies, as I know how simple they are to create!

In 1978, while attending technical college, I built one of the first micro-computer kits, the [Southwest Technical Products 6800](#) and a matching CRT-based data terminal. For my term project in my senior year, I designed and built an RTTY terminal unit and used the 6800 to convert the 5-bit Baudot to 7-bit ASCII and display the received text on the CRT. I did not have my ham license at that time, so this was a receive-only project.

Twenty-five years later, I sold the 6800 system (which had since become a collector's item) on eBay to fund the purchase of an Elecraft K2. The K2 has given me more pleasure, first from building it and now from operating it, than any kit since that first Heathkit. Nothing beats soldering a bunch of components to a circuit board, attaching a power source and a wire antenna, and suddenly hearing signals being transmitted from thousands of miles away.

These days, you can still find quite a few simple electronic kits on the market, but commercial kits as complex as the K2 are almost non-existent. One of the problems is that, with the relentless drive towards miniaturization and automation in manufacturing, many components, particularly new semiconductors, are no longer available in through-hole format. While some kits (notably Steve Weber's [ATS-3 transceiver](#)) are being supplied with surface-mount devices, I suspect that not too many people are up for the physical challenge of attempting to identify and solder these tiny components to a PC board. This is certainly one of the reasons that Elecraft's new K3 transceiver, which relies heavily on SMT technology, is being supplied as a “no-solder” kit.

If you want to be shocked, do a search on eBay for completed auctions of *unbuilt* Heathkits. You will find that these kits are routinely selling for two to five times what they originally sold for. I'm quite tempted to buy another K2 kit while they are still available, and put it in storage untouched for 20 years or so. Who knows — it might help fund my future grandchild's education!

Next month, I will offer some kit-building tips for both the first-time and the seasoned kit builder.

73, Mark, AI4BJ

# August Meeting Minutes

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The meeting was called to order by Tony White at 7:31 p.m. at the Turkey Foot Middle School. The pledge to the flag followed.

The motion made to accept the treasurer's report as presented by Dann Fox passed.

The motion made to accept the July minutes as presented in the Feedline passed.

Self introductions were made.

Tony White announced that a change in the club's trustee is in the works, and that the 147.375 repeater is fixed. It just needs to be put in place. There is a 123.0 PL tone on all of our repeaters except the 146.895 machine at NKU.

Lyle Hamilton announced that two candidates passed their technicians test tonight.

Lynn Ernst announced that 22 members were in attendance at KY7ET's August meeting at St. William Church in Williamstown.

Tony announced that the nominating committee will start searching for candidates next month.

Greg May announced that he and Judy attended

the Findley Ham Fest last year and that it was well worth the trip. This year's Findley Ham Fest is on September 9.

Information on the Great Lakes Convention to be held in the Cleveland area on September 22 was made available to those in attendance.

A motion passed for the club to become a club affiliate of World Radio Magazine for \$70 per year. This will get our club's information listed on the Visit Your Local Radio Club page of the Magazine.

There was a general consensus that there is enough interest for the club to continue with the idea of having an antenna building competition.

After a break for pizza, Mark Volstad presented a program on kits for the club to consider for its kit building project. It was determined that there was enough interest for the Board of Directors to go ahead with the project. The board would like to reimburse each member \$10 for the cost of the kit.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Bob Burns, AB4BK

***The September NKARC meeting will include a refresher on Echolink and a swap meet. Please join us Monday, September 10th, and bring some of that extra equipment from your shack!***

# Weaver's Words

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**Jim Weaver, K8JE**  
**Great Lakes Division Director, ARRL**  
**E-mail: [k8je@arrl.org](mailto:k8je@arrl.org); Tel.: 513-459-0142**

## Ohio QSO Party

The Ohio QSO Party is August 25. The time is listed as 2600Z-0400Z. Operation will be on 3.5-28 MHz SSB and CW. Thirteen awards are available. Check it out at [www.oqp.us/](http://www.oqp.us/).

## Its now easier than ever to Join and Rejoin ARRL

Joining and rejoining ARRL now take just a few clicks on the Internet. If one goes to <http://www.arrl.org/join.html>, new or renewed memberships take only five minutes. There is even real-time credit card processing and verification. Your card information is kept by a bank. If you pay using the ARRL Visa card, you will not only pay your dues, but US Bank will also kick a small percent of the amount of your dues to ARRL. It's a true win-win situation.

## GLD FAR Scholarship Winners

Winners of Foundation for Amateur Radio (FAR) scholarships in the Great Lakes Division were announced recently. Congratulations go:

- To Michael Volz, W8KAR, East Lansing, Michigan, recipient of the Rose Ellen Bills Memorial Scholarship (\$2000), and
- To Stephen M. Sciarini, KC8IDJ, Dover, Ohio, recipient of a Radio Club of America Scholarship (\$1000), and recipient of the Robert E. True Memorial Scholarship (\$1000, Sponsored by Mrs. Shirley True Banning.

The FAR is a private foundation headquartered in Washington, DC. It awards 56 scholarships sponsored by 26 clubs annually. Scholarship information is on the FAR website, [www.amateurradio-far.org/](http://www.amateurradio-far.org/).

The ARRL Foundation offers about 60 scholarships, grants and other programs annually. Go to [www.arrlf.org/](http://www.arrlf.org/) to learn about ARRL Foundation awards.

## New EmComm Director on Board

Dennis Dura, K2DCD, is on board as the first ARRL Emergency Preparedness and Response Manager. Dura's major responsibilities include addressing the development and implementation of an organizational disaster response plan as well as a continuity operations plan, complete with supporting procedures and training. Integral to these plans are the recommendations of the National Emergency Response Planning Committee (NERPC) report. Dennis brings considerable professional experience in emergency, disaster and support communication with government and private agencies to this new post.

You will be able to get a good look into Mr. Dura's plans for ARRL and ARES at the Great Lakes Division Convention in Cleveland. He will lead the EmComm seminar on September 22. Please see [www.2007gldc.com/](http://www.2007gldc.com/) for information on the Convention.



## How ARRL is Organized

In the last issue of Weaver's Words, I discussed who is ultimately in charge of ARRL. This month, I want to go a little deeper into the ARRL management picture. The purpose of this discussion is to provide a good understanding the ARRL organization and who is

responsible for what

ARRL management, when viewed from the top down, can be depicted as:

1. Membership
2. Board of Directors
3. Executive Committee
4. Officers
5. CEO and through him our Staff (HQ, Washington, etc.)

Members elect the Directors. There are 15 Directors; one for each of 15 ARRL Divisions. Directors are the policy makers for ARRL. The Executive Committee and Officers are elected by the Board. They function between Board meetings to ensure policy set by the Board is followed. Our Chief Executive Officer (CEO) reports to the Board through the President. He is responsible for developing and operating programs and services that implement the policies of the Board. All additional staff members at HQ and elsewhere report to the CEO.

A Division Director reports to the members of his/her Divi-

sion. However, direct control by members' is limited to voting the Director in or out of office. Directors are elected for three-year terms. They are subject to recall by vote of the members.

While in office, the Director is required to obtain input on Amateur Radio issues from members of the Division he represents. The Director is also charged with obtaining this information from other available sources. All information collected is used to reach decisions when voting on changes or additions to ARRL policy.

In summary, the Director of each Division is the person responsible for putting decisions made by the Board in to practice and for all Division-level activities in the Division. No one else (another Director, ARRL Officer or ARRL staff member) has authority over a Division Director so long as the Director follows the League governing documents.

I've not mentioned Section Managers (SMs). SMs are administrators who are responsible for managing the seven ARRL Field programs in their sections. These programs are developed to put Board policy into action. The SM has direct responsibility for ARES, NTS, OO and the other Field Operations. Consequently, requests, suggestions and complaints about these programs should be directed to the SM or to the appropriate member of his staff.

SMs are elected by the members in the Section for two-year terms. They report to the Membership and Volunteer Programs Department at HQ, not to the Division Director. The boundaries of most Sections, including Kentucky, Michigan and Ohio, are identical with their states. This is not true in several instances including California, Florida, New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Texas which are split into two or more sections, each.

As an informed membership, each of you should have a decent idea of where to go with questions, suggestions or complaints. This "where" depends on the type of issue. Questions to the Director would include:

1. Why doesn't ARRL develop a particular new program?
2. Why was the Great Lakes Division Convention set for September 22 (Yom Kippur)?
3. Why did I have a problem with a contact with HQ?
4. Why did the Board of Directors establish a particular policy?

SM-oriented questions might include:

1. Why doesn't my EC conduct the type of training I believe is necessary?
2. How do we get PRB-1 enacted into law in our state? 3.

How do I become an OO? 4. Who is the Affiliated Club Coordinator?

Questions that should be directed to HQ would include:

1. Why is my published Sweepstakes score different from the score I turned in?
2. Why can't I use Logbook of the World to enter the CQ World Wide contest?
3. Why does my friend a block away from me receive QST a week before I receive it?
4. How do I make a nomination for one of the national ARRL awards?
5. Can I connect my Widget 713 to my Whatzit 600 to operate PSK-31?

Obviously, if an attempted contact fails even though you follow these guidelines, it becomes time to look elsewhere for help. In any such case, contact your SM if the issue relates to Section activities and operations. Contact your Director about division-level activities or the operation of HQ.

I realize it is very simple to think of CEO Sumner as the focal point for all communication, but this is incorrect. He and the others at HQ have their jobs to perform. Bombarding them with questions, suggestions and complaints that more appropriately should go to someone else merely wastes your time and your dues money by drawing them away from these duties.

I hope this discussion helps many of you understand a little better how ARRL is organized. If you have any questions about this organization, let me — or your SM — know.

### More League Literature Upgraded

The New Ham Express, the introductory information HQ sends to newly licensed radio amateurs, has had its style and content expanded. This packet is intended to facilitate bringing new amateurs on board the local and national Amateur Radio communities. The goal of these mailings is to make new hams receptive to becoming active in local amateur clubs and activities . . . and the ARRL.

Upgrading the New Ham Express is just one step in a continuing program to make literature from ARRL more attractive and meaningful

### Division Convention -- More

As good as earlier Great Lakes Division Conventions of the modern era have been, the 2007 offering will be just as much better. Top experts will lead seminars in which we all can learn something new, interesting and helpful. ARRL President



Joel Harrison, W5ZN, will speak and fill us in on what is happening in the rather hectic world in which we hams compete. In addition, he and I will be on hand to check 160 M QSL cards for DXCC and other ARRL awards. This in itself is a rare treat and avoids the usual need to mail these cards to HQ for this checking.

### **The Board's Position on Background Checking**

One of the more major actions taken by us Directors as the July Board meeting related to background checking. Keep in mind that we did not and will not try to tell you, the member, what you can or cannot do regarding this or much of anything else. All we want to do is to inform you about issues so you can make intelligent decisions for yourself. This is a free country and we will no attempt to infringe upon your freedom.

What we did: We, the Board of Directors, passed a resolution concerning background checking. In this resolution, we stated there ideally would be no reason for any of our served agencies to require background checks on ARES and other ARRL members. Notice the word, "ideally."

We then acknowledged that performing criminal background checks was generally acceptable and that these checks should be done by a government agency -- not by some private company that has no specific legal oversight in managing such checks. We especially stated there should be no need for served agencies to perform credit checks, manner of living checks, investigative background checks into all facets of our lives if our duties are to be communicators and surveyors during disaster operations. A ham that serves as treasurer in some other highly sensitive area for the Red Cross or the Salvation Army might legitimately be required to undergo, such checks, but not a communicator.

### **Board Action regarding Digital**

Also at the July Board meeting, the Directors unanimously passed a motion stating "The League affirms its desire to work with developers of digital systems including the Winlink 2000 system to improve efficiency, address control issues, and enhance compatibility with other users of the Amateur Radio bands."

There are a number of members who see the situation as totally dark and bleak when it comes to digital (especially Winlink 2K). Conversely, there are those who see anything especially related to promoting Winlink as no-brainers that should have been implemented years ago. There is no doubt in my mind that the actual truth lies in between. This, of course, means I am now considered a total idiot by people at either extreme in this picture.

I have said repeatedly that much of the future of Amateur Radio lies in high-speed digital operating. This is particularly true regarding certain critical aspects of emergency communication.

Winlink 2K is touted by many as the ultimate solution to our quest for fast, reliable disaster communication. However, before they can consistently play a major role in disaster communication, systems such as Winlink 2K must be technically reliable, reasonably available to a high percent of disaster workers and operationally reliable. They must not be subject to the whims of one or two people who have the power and ability to flip the switch to turn it off at critical moments. There also need to be answers to still more questions including reasonable avoidance of QRM, ability to prevent SPAM and similar issues.

Yes, MARS has adopted WL 2K. Keep in mind in its use by MARS it is under the control of the US Military. ARRL has no police authority similar to the Military. 'huf said?

### **National Preparedness Month is September**

The following message is reprinted from an ARRL PR List mailing by PR Director Allen Pitts, W1AGP:

I just got the "toolkit" for it and the ARRL is registered as a participant. Now the toolkit is actually a Word.doc file and rather large — over 2 megs. That's too big to attach here. So I chopped it down as much as I dared and posted it in a special place on the Hello-Radio site.

It is NOT listed on the index there. It's not for the public — but for us PIOs.

You can see it at <http://www.hello-radio.org/2007NPM.doc>

Note that the NPM is in caps! (or will not work)

The DHS folks went overboard this year and there is a lot of good things in there for you to use, cut, paste and fill-in.

I hope that you will use the materials in your home area as a team with other agencies.

(End quote.)

My reason for distributing this is to encourage all clubs to participate in National Preparedness Month. Why? First, it is a good thing to do. All of us should prepare ourselves for the inevitable disasters that come along every now and then. Second, DHS is the primary emergency response organization in the country. To be quite honest, we should do everything le-



gitimate and possible to impress them with the professionalism of Amateur Radio and ARES in preparing for and responding to emergency situations.

Good luck.

**Who says we don't have Clout?**

Thanks to the number of members in his Congressional District, Rep. Bart Stupak (MI) signed on to co-sponsor HR 462 that would help protect Amateur Radio frequencies. Thanks, folks.

**Exams in Spanish**

It is a sign of the times. Because there is a serious issue over illegal aliens coming into the US from south of the border, it seems unfortunately inevitable that anything Spanish will be the source of hostility and argument among certain segments of the US population. Most American hams come from the US population; therefore, Amateur Radio is just another field for the same hostility and argument.

At the recent meeting of the National Conference of VECs, the ARRL VEC proposed a single set of Spanish Amateur Radio license exams should be developed. As soon as this was announced publicly, the hostility and invectives were released.

Never mind, apparently, that the FCC has made Spanish language exams available for decades. Spanish is the principal language of some US possessions. Ever hear of Puerto Rico?

Since early in the existence of VECs, the FCC has permitted VEs to translate US ham exams into Spanish. The result of this is there are probably nearly as many versions of the text of Spanish-language exam text as there are translations. This is not good.

What the ARRL VEC did was to vote to replace the multiple translations of Spanish-language Amateur Radio exam texts with single, official translations. The action has nothing to do with whether or not ham exams will be available in Spanish. Incidentally, because of concerns over the logistics involved, the motion failed.

**Tentative Travel Schedule**

- Sep 8: GRAHamfest, Grand Rapids, MI - Jim
- Sep 9: Findlay Hamfest, Findlay, OH - Jim
- Sep 22: Great Lakes Division Convention, Cleveland, OH - Gary & Jim
- Sep 23: Cleveland Hamfest, Cleveland, OH - Jim
- Oct 2: OH-KY-IN ARRL Night, Cincinnati, OH - Jim
- Oct 8: Portage County ARS, Kent, OH - Jim
- Oct 16: Branch Co. ARC, Coldwater, MI - Jim

# QSL Card of the Month

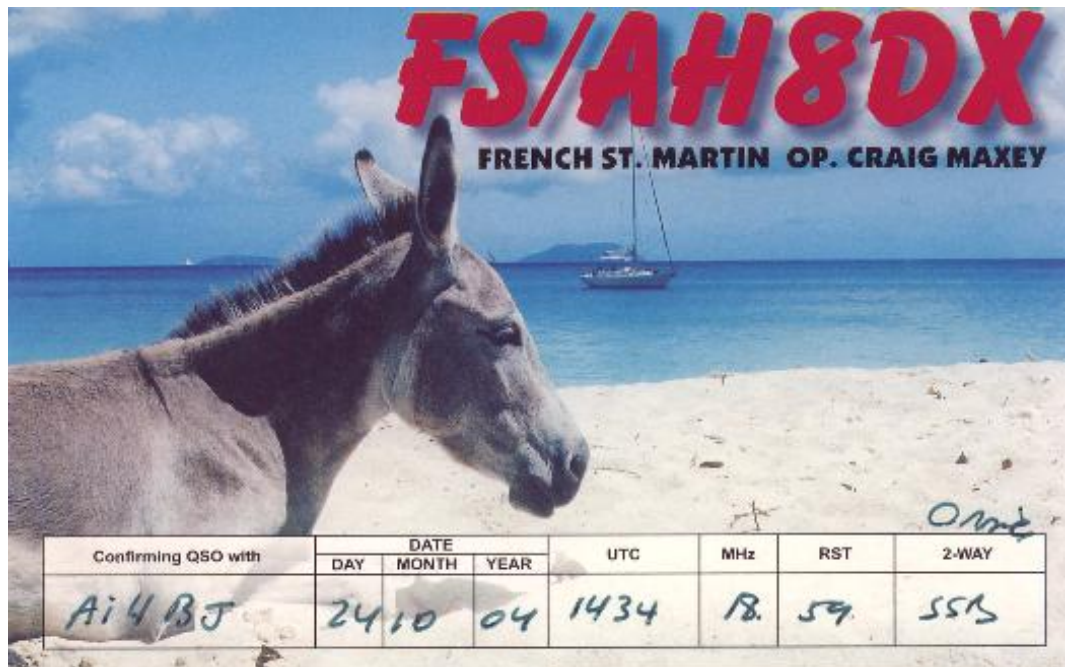
**Submitted by:**

Mark Volstad, AI4BJ

**Comments:**

I love this card! Does anybody know if donkeys normally wander along the beaches of St. Martin?

*If you have a special QSL card you would like to share, submit it to the Feedline editor, along with any comments you would like included.*



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