



The Feedline

A Cabin, 15 Boy Scouts, and Ham Radio

by Mark Volstad, AI4BJ

I've always been interested in sharing my passion for Amateur Radio with youngsters, and a great opportunity to do exactly that was presented to me in early January. That's when I learned that the Scouts of Troop 779 in Edgewood were interested in earning their Radio [merit badge](#). The ham who had originally offered to act as their merit badge counselor had had to back out for personal reasons, and they were looking for a replacement counselor. I volunteered immediately, as did Lyle Hamilton, AB8SH.



hunting, contesting, back-country operating, weather-spotting and making contacts via satellite, meteor scatter and moon-bounce. I must have guessed correctly, because the group of about 20 boys remained highly attentive for the duration of my one-hour talk, asking many good questions along the way. Expecting that they would want to get their hands on some real gear, I had brought along my Elecraft KX1 and K2 transceivers. They were amazed to learn that a radio the size of a small

See "Merit Badge", page 4

After an exchange of emails with Andrew Fine, the troop's committee chairman, it was agreed that as a first step I would come out to one of the troop's regular meetings to introduce the boys to Amateur Radio and hopefully whet their appetites for earning the merit badge.

As part of my show'n tell, I put together a PowerPoint presentation that highlighted the aspects of the hobby that I felt would appeal the most to boys of their age (11 to 15). This included DXing and the DXCC award, fox-

Upcoming Programs

Jim Weaver, K8JE, Director ARRL Great Lakes Division, and **Jim Brooks**, KY4Z, ARRL Kentucky Section Manager, will be the special guests at the **February 8** NKARC meeting. Plan on attending this meeting to find out how the League has been serving its members in recent months.

Techniques for **learning Morse Code**, or improving your existing CW skills, will be the subject of a presentation by **Mark Volstad**, AI4BJ, at the **March** NKARC meeting.

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Dates to Remember:

- Feb 8 – NKARC membership meeting
- Feb 20/21 – ARRL DX Contest (CW)
- Feb 27/28 – N.A. QSO Party (Digital)
- Mar 8 – NKARC membership meeting

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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.

NKARC Net: Tuesdays, 8:30 PM on the 147.255 repeater

VE Testing: Testing sessions are held by appointment only on the 2nd Monday of each month, prior to the NKARC membership meeting. Testing begins at 6:00 pm. To make an appointment, contact Lyle Hamilton at ab8sh@arrl.net or tel. 513-315-4032

NKARC Web Site: <http://www.k4co.org>

NKARC Membership Meetings: 2nd Monday of each month at 7:30 pm at the Hilltop Church of Christ, 5300 Taylor Mill Rd (Ky. 16), Taylor Mill, KY. Visitors are always welcome!

The Feedline is published monthly by and for the members of the Northern Kentucky Amateur Radio Club. It is distributed via direct email to current NKARC members. **If you are a member but are not receiving your copy, please notify the Feedline editor.** Permission is hereby granted to any non-profit amateur radio group to quote or reprint from this publication provided appropriate source credit is given. Submissions for the March

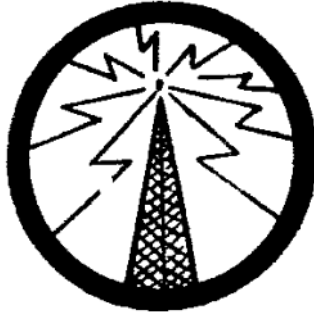
Feedline must be received no later than February 27. Submissions, address or call changes and circulation problems may be sent to the Feedline editor:

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Top of the Tower

I was asked to write the Top of the Tower this month and introduce myself. While preparing to write this article, I reflected on the fact that despite being a member of the Club for several years, I am not sure how much members really know about me. Or, I know about them! Hopefully, this will begin to change that...

My interest in electronics, radios, computers, and science in general started, like many of you, when I was just a kid – probably around 9 or so. My parents fostered my interests wholeheartedly, including lots of trips to Radio Shack. It was from Radio Shack where I received as gifts and/or purchased several shortwave radio kits. I even remember putting one of them together in time to listen to airplane traffic so I could hear my Dad's flight (he left that afternoon). Sometime in the early months of 1982, we saw an ad in the paper for an Amateur Radio class being put together by a local ham, Paul Hamilton (WD4MQQ). So, both my Dad and I attended the class, learned Morse code, and proceeded to take our FCC tests (when the FCC visited Knoxville around April 1982 – there were no such things as VEs then!). We both passed and became brand new Novices... I became KB4AVR and my Dad became KB4AVQ. At that time, we had limited frequencies available to us and the only mode was Morse code on HF. But, did I ever have fun! Ten meters was wide open (sun spots were at a high for sure) and I literally talked around the world at all times of the day. As my interest took off and my CW skill increased, my Dad and I took Paul up on a new class he was offering – General. What I found out during that time was that my Dad had wanted to become a Ham for years and that while in the military, he already mastered CW and electronic theory. So, while I was a 15 year old kid struggling to copy and send the required 13 WPM CW, along with the theory, my Dad was just idling along. When the time came to test again, we both passed the tests; but while I upgraded to General, he upgraded to Extra. It would be a few years before I became an Extra! But, during that time, our current call signs were handed out to us – N4IJS for me and WN4W for my Dad.



Ham Radio has stayed with me since then. I learned so many skills through the hobby, including how to connect computer to radios back when that just wasn't the norm. In fact, I still have my Kantronics KAM from those days, although I don't use it anymore – now just using my homebrewed sound card interface instead.

Flash forward to today. Both my wife Toni (KI4NRG) and my oldest son Robert (W4XBX) are Hams. I have four children in all ranging in ages from 17 to 2.5 years old. Quite the span!

Needless to say, that certainly keeps me busy. And, Ham Radio is still with me. I enjoy HF quite a bit – SSB, CW, and the digital modes, along with VHF operations and the latest technologies such as D-STAR. I truly believe that this hobby has provided me not only with a life-long hobby (28 years now and still going strong!), but also steered me towards my choice of occupation. Through Ham radio I've honed my desire to fix things and understand how it all works. My other hobbies include digital photography, computer technology, and other similar things. My wife and I are ARRL Life Members and my son Robert is also a member of the ARRL. Everyone in the entire family, excluding the 2.5 year old of course, are trained weather spotters, too. Additionally, we are members of OHKYIN and I am a 10-10 member (#36262) as well as a Quarter Century Wireless Association member.

I want to thank all of you for electing me Vice President. I am honored to be able to serve you. I hope to bring my passion for this hobby to the position along with some of the skills and knowledge that I have picked up over the years. I realize I have big shoes to fill from Robert Gulley (AK3Q) and I hope to serve you as well as he has

If you ever need to reach me, feel free to either call me on the air or shoot me an email (n4ijs@k4co.org).

73 and hope to see you on the air,

Robert Kluck – N4IJS

"Merit Badge", continued from Cover

paperback powered by 6 AA batteries could be used to contact hams in other countries!

But the real highlight of the evening was when I brought out my shiny gold Begali CW [paddle](#) and connected it to my K2 in test mode. One thing that I learned years ago is that kids are utterly fascinated by Morse Code! They quickly formed a line to try their hand at sending their names in Morse Code, using the chart I provided. I had also brought along a stack of older QST magazines that I no longer needed, and these were snapped up in short order.

I didn't attempt to make any contacts that evening, or even to hook up an antenna for listening. For one thing, the meeting location (the below-ground level cafeteria of St. Pius School) was sub-optimal for reception, and also because I wanted to leave them with an additional incentive for showing up for the planned outing at which they would complete the requirements for the merit badge.

This outing was scheduled for the last Saturday in January, at [Potter's Ranch](#). Potter's Ranch must be the best-kept secret in Boone County. It's a 440-acre Christian retreat in a wilderness setting where Gunpowder Creek discharges into the Ohio River. The "[cabin](#)" where we spent the day was actually a very comfortable ranch-style house.

Preparing for the merit badge day was made much easier by a terrific [web site](#) that K2GW has built. It includes training materials in Word and Power-Point format and a workbook for the scouts to complete. Lyle and I took turns going through the material with the boys. By 2:00 in the afternoon we had reached one of the key requirements for the badge, the much-anticipated live QSO.

We installed my Elecraft K3 on the kitchen table.

A large flat clearing behind the cabin was perfect for putting up a temporary antenna. We used my 40-meter doublet, hanging it from a 33-ft fiberglass pole, which was mounted in Lyle's home-made tripod. The open-wire feedline was fed through the kitchen window to the K3. The boys split into two groups. One group would burn off pent-up energy on a hike, while the second group stayed behind to make their QSOs. The groups would then switch activities.



The first scout started out on 20 Meters, but didn't have any luck getting a reply to his CQs. We scanned the band, and found quite a few stations calling "CQ Winter Field Day". He replied to one such contester from West Virginia, and after learning what the appropriate exchange was, the first QSO was in the bag. Completing the second QSO took some time, and Lyle and I realized that we would have to change tactics if all the boys were going to complete their QSOs. Using my

HT, Lyle managed to raise Brian De Young, K4BRI, on the Walton repeater. Brian agreed to meet us on 40 Meters with his HF rig. We found him on the agreed frequency, but he was very weak. We moved up to 15 Meters where he could use his beam, and we both had solid copy.



The boys lined up for their QSOs, and Brian did yeoman's work encouraging the boys, who exhibited some normal first-QSO mic fright. After about 45 minutes, the first group had completed their QSOs. With Brian's Alexandria QTH, it wasn't exactly DX, but the boys were very satisfied nevertheless.

By the time the second group returned from their hike, Brian had gone QRT. Lyle and I decided to keep things simple, so he took some of the boys down the road in his car, where they used his mobile rig to complete 2-Meter contacts with the boys who remained in the cabin, using my handheld.

All that remained was to check the boys' work-

books and fill out the "blue cards" which indicate that the scout has completed all the requirements for the badge. Lyle and I agreed that they were a great group of kids to work with. They were polite and respectful, and they expressed their gratitude to us for helping them earn their merit badges.

Several of the boys expressed a serious interest in earning their Technician license, and Lyle and I are hopeful that we may see one or more of them at an NKARC VE session in the coming months!



January NKARC Net Report

DATE	NCS	CHECKINS	TIME (MINS)	TRAFFIC
1/5/10	AJ4DK (Don)	12	28	0
1/12/10	KB4VKS (Mike)	15	36	0
1/19/10	N4IJS (Robert)	16	30	0
1/26/10	KB4VKS (Mike)	13	25	0
TOTALS:		56	119	0

Weaver's Words

Jim Weaver, K8JE
Great Lakes Division Director, ARRL
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New MOU with Red Cross Approved

The ARRL Board of Directors has approved a new Memorandum of Understanding between the American Red Cross and ARRL. The new MOU is the result of lengthy negotiations between the two organizations. Being discussed was a Red Cross requirement that Amateur Radio operators who wished to serve as volunteer communicators agree to have an extensive background check performed. The new MOU allows for amateurs to avoid agreeing to such checking.

The new MOU includes an agreement by RC to accept the results of criminal background checks performed by State or local law enforcement agencies as well as checks performed by Mybackgroundcheck.com.



From the time negotiations for the new MOU began, the two organizations had agreed that requiring criminal background on volunteer communicators was reasonable. Unfortunately, the only mechanism RC identified for having the checks done was through a service that automatically required the volunteer to agree to multiple forms of checks. These included manner of living and financial background checks in addition to the needed criminal check. You may recall that RC asserted they would have no more than criminal checks run on communication volunteers regardless of the wording of the agreement the volunteer was required to sign.

We on the ARRL Board did not believe it was appropriate to accept a new MOU that included such an overly-comprehensive background check agree-

ment. Our goal was to make it possible for individual amateurs to have three options available when considering supporting Red Cross communication. These options were to agree to multiple background checks and to agree only to a criminal background check. The third option, of course, is to choose not to have a background check run and not to be a volunteer.

This goal has been accomplished. Hams considering becoming RC volunteers now have the full range of choice.

RC agreement to accept criminal background checks performed by law enforcement agencies came with one provision. This is that any fee for having the check done will not be paid by RC. The fee will need to be paid by some other agency or by the individual volunteer. This should pose no problem in situations in which criminal background checks are performed on behalf of EMA or other civil agency with which the amateur is a volunteer.

Conclusions: RC and ARRL have an active MOU once again. To volunteer to provide support to RC as a radio amateur, the amateur will need to undergo a background check. The background check may be done through the RC at no charge to the volunteer; however, following this process the volunteer will agree to being subjected to a variety of background checks. Instead of having background checking done through the RC, Amateur Radio volunteers may have the checking done by a State or local police agency. Following this process, the volunteer will be required to pay for having the checking performed provided the fee is not already covered by EMA or some other agency.

It was refreshing to have RC change its initial position and to agree to accept criminal background checks performed by duly constituted civil agen-

cies.

<http://www.arrl.org/announce/board-1001/>.

ARRL Board Adopts Position on 97.113

Throughout the past several months there has been much discussion over the desirability of allowing employee-hams to perform training and emergency communications work for their employers. The FCC has responded to this discussion by liberalizing part 97.113 of the Amateur Radio rules and allowing exceptions to the rule for government-sponsored drills. Rather than have the Commission announce rulemaking in the area without first receiving Amateur Radio input, the Board developed a proposed modification of current rule.

Before taking action, the directors studied a report by a special committee that was established at the Board meeting last July. The committee reviewed 97.113 to determine the possible actions the Board might wish to take. Three basic actions, including suggesting no change in the rule, were presented to the directors. Petitioning for a change was the action we chose following a healthy debate. We voted unanimously to modify 97.113 (3) to read:

“(3) Communications in which the station licensee or control operator has a pecuniary interest, including communications on behalf of an employer, except that the station licensee or control operator may, on behalf of an employer, participate in emergency preparedness and disaster drills that include Amateur operations for the purpose of emergency response, disaster relief or the testing and maintenance of equipment used for that purpose. Amateur operators may, however . . .”

ARRL Board Meeting Minutes Posted

The minutes of the January meeting of the ARRL Board of Directors may be read at

Board: Technical Consultants for Commissioners

At its meeting in January, the ARRL Board of Directors voted to provide active support to a US Senate bill that would enable FCC Commissioners to add an additional consultant to their staffs. The bi-partisan FCC Commissioners’ Technical Resource Enhancement Act has bipartisan sponsorship by Senators Olympia Snowe (ME) and Mark Warner (VA). The bill, S. 2881, has been assigned to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.



The bill is intended to ensure each FCC Commissioner has a technical consultant on staff. This clearly is not the case at present.

If authorized, the new, appointed positions will be open to electrical engineers and computer scientists. These technical positions will be in addition to the general consultant positions currently authorized to each Commissioner.

ARRL Receiving Applications for EPR Manager

The ARRL continues to solicit applications for the open position of Emergency Preparedness and Response (EPR) Manager. Several applications have already been received.

The job is based at ARRL HQ in Newington, CT. The successful applicant will represent the League with government and non-government emergency and disaster response organizations and partners for planning, continuity and operational purposes.

Requirements for the position include holding a

General Class or higher amateur license, having a minimum of 5 years experience in ARES(r) or equivalent and hold a Bachelor-level or higher degree. For further requirements and a description of the EPR Manager position, go to <http://www.arrl.org/announce/jobs/>. Interested amateurs should follow the instructions on the Internet notice to apply.

Ohio PRB-1 Bill has Hearing

Ohio State House of Representatives bill HB 212 received its second hearing by the Public Safety and Homeland Security Committee on January 19. Section Manager (SM) Frank Piper, KI8GW, State Government Liaison Nick Pitner, K8AP and bill ramrod Assistant SM Steve Katz, N8WL headed the group that provided testimony on behalf of the bill. The legislation awaits its third hearing after which it is expected to be released to the floor of the House for action.

A companion bill was introduced into the Senate in December and is awaiting further action.

Michigan SM Dale Williams, WA8EFK and his legislative team are also working a PRB-1 bill through the Michigan House.

Assistant to EPR Manager Authorized

Not content with obtaining a new Emergency Preparedness and Response (EPR) Manager, the ARRL Board authorized a new position to support the this manager. The new position will be filled after the new EPR Manager has been able to determine the form of support needed.

Additional IT Programmer will be Hired

The Board also authorized hiring an additional

programmer in the Information Technology department. With IT increasingly being a critical function in the progress of greater numbers of projects, the Board and Staff are committed to move backlogged projects. Linking VUCC with LoTW will be among the first of these projects to move forward. Other projects to facilitate awards projects and management activity can be expected to follow.

Division Convention Seeks Sponsor

The Great Lakes Division is looking for interested individuals, clubs or groups to sponsor the Division Convention in 2011. The dates and location of the convention as well as details of the program and other features will determined by the sponsoring organization and the Division Cabinet (Director, Vice Director, Section Managers and Division Legislative Action Chair).

Organizations interested in learning more about sponsoring the 2011 Great Lakes Division Convention should contact Jim Weaver, K8JE, Great Lakes Division Director at k8je@arrl.org.

Webinar: Club Legal Considerations

Good friend and colleague Director Bill Edgar, N3LLR once again has invited members of the Great Lakes Division to participate in a webinar. This webinar will be of particular interest to leaders in local clubs. The following is the announcement Director Edgar sent to me:

“The Atlantic Division is conducting a webinar with three well qualified attorneys doing a presentation for amateur radio club officers or prospective club officers. This webinar presentation and panel discussion will be led by ARRL Corporate Counsel, Chris Imlay W3KD. Joining Chris as panelists will be attorneys, Bob Famiglio K3RF and Mike Lazaroff K3AIR. This presentation will

touch on legal issues for amateur radio clubs or organizations. The panel will cover club incorporation, liability issues, and legal issues for clubs.

"We will have a question and answer period after the presentation.

"To register for this webinar on Wednesday, March 6th from 9pm to 10:30pm, please use the following URL:

<https://www1.gotomeeting.com/register/503665777>

The GLD in Print

An oops. I copied a misspelling last month when I referred to Verle Willingham. Verle may be a most willing ham, but his last name is Winningham. I should have caught the error -- but didn't. He is, indeed, K8VW. Verle also noted that many amateurs who belonged to the defunct Firebird Net still congregate on 7.2775 MHz. Sorry for perpetuating the error, Verle.

Tentative Travel & Hamfest Schedule

Hamfests in the following list have received ARRL sanctioning as of press time. Hamfests and other events for which a Great Lakes Division representative is scheduled to attend are identified with the representative's name. The schedule can be expected to be fine-tuned in the future.

Patronize ARRL-sanctioned hamfests. Sponsors, please have your hamfest sanctioned soon.

- 6 Feb: HARA Swap & Shop, Negaunee, MI
- 7 Feb: NOARS Winter Hamfest, Lorain, OH
- 9 Feb: Northern Kentucky ARC presentation - Jim
- 11 Feb: SW Ohio DXA presentation - Jim

- 13 Feb: Cherryland Hamfest, Traverse City, MI
- 13 Feb: IARC League Dinner Night, Mansfield, OH - Jim
- 14 Feb: Midwinter Hamfest, Mansfield, OH - Jim
- 21 Feb: Livonia Swap n Shop, Livonia, MI
- 6 Mar: Mammoth Cave Hamfest, Cave City, KY - Jim
- 18 Mar: Bellbrook ARC Annual Dinner, Waynesville, OH - Jim
- 20 Mar: Michigan Crossroads Hamfest, Marshall, MI -- Jim
- 21 Mar: TMRA Hamfest/Computer Show, Toledo, OH - Jay, Jim
- 3 Apr: ARGYL Hamfest, Lowell, MI
- 3 Apr: Lincoln Trail Hamfest, Elizabethtown, KY
- 10 Apr: JCARC Hamfest, Radio Show, Jackson, OH
- 17 Apr: Milford Swap & Shop, Highland, MI
- 18 Apr: Cuyahoga Falls Hamfest, Cuyahoga Falls, OH
- 25 Apr: Athens Hamfest, Athens, OH
- 1 May: Louisa Hamfest, Louisa, KY - Jim
- 1 May: Cadillac Hamfest, Cadillac, MI
- 14-16 May: Hamvention(r), Dayton, OH - Gary, Jim
- 5 Jun: Fulton Co. ARC Hamfest, Tedrow, OH
- 5 Jun: Carter Co. Hamfest, Olive Hill, KY
- 19 Jun: Milford Hamfest, Milford, OH - Jim
- 19 Jun: Midland Hamfest, Midland, MI
- 20 Jun: Monroe Hamfest, Monroe, MI -- Jim
- 8 Jul: Mahoning Valley ARA, presentation -- Jim
- 16-17 Jul: Board of Directors, Windsor, CT -- Gary, Jim
- 7 Aug: UP Hamfest, Escanaba, MI
- 25 Jul: Portage Hamfair, Randolph, OH
- 22 Aug: Cambridge Hamfest, Cambridge, OH
- 11 Sep: Grtr Louisville 'fest, Shepherdsville, KY
- 12 Sep: Findlay Hamfest, Findlay, OH - Jim
- 18 Sep: Central KY ARS Hamfest, Richmond, KY - Jim
- 26 Sep: Cleveland Hamfest, Cleveland, OH - Jim
- 30 Oct: Hazard Hamfest, Hazard, KY

Note: Minutes of the January NKARC membership meeting were not received by publication deadline.

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CLASS**

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**NKARC Feedline February 2010
Volume 2010 Issue 2**