

Vol. 2010, #3  
March 2010



NORTHERN KENTUCKY AMATEUR RADIO CLUB

# The Feedline

## ARRL Comes to Taylor Mill



Jim Weaver, K8JE, ARRL Great Lakes Division Director, attended the February 8 NKARC meeting and talked about what the League has accomplished recently and its priorities for the future.

### Upcoming Programs

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 8 NKARC meeting**.

Mike Nie, W8VMX, Public Information Officer of [WARN](#), will be presenting at the April NKARC meeting.



The deadline for submissions for the April Feedline is **Saturday, April 3**.

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### Dates to Remember:

Mar 8 – NKARC membership meeting  
Apr 12 – NKARC membership meeting  
May 14-16 – Dayton [Hamvention](#)  
May 19-23 – [National ARDF Championship](#)  
June 26 – [Paddlefest](#)  
June 26-27 – ARRL Field Day

# 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.

**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](mailto: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 in good standing 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, ad-

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# Top of the Tower

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## *Are you ready?*

Recently, I read an interesting article in the March edition of *CQ* magazine.

Well, it was more of a blurb inside of a column, but it still struck a chord with me.

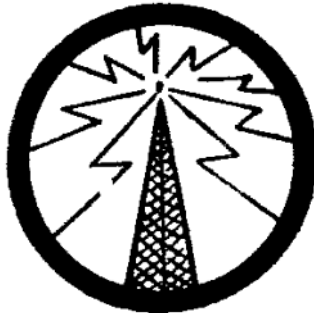
Basically, the gist of the story was this: A Ham couple were on a Cub Scout hiking trip with their 8 year old son. They hiked for about an hour to a mountain camp site. Normal, everyday type of activity, right?

Well, while they were out looking for something, they heard some moaning coming from the side of the mountain. At first, they thought it was a wounded animal, but they decided to investigate. It turned out to be another parent of a Scout on the hike who had fallen off the side of the mountain and landed on an outcropping. He was injured very badly and needed help.

The first thing they tried was their cell phones. Surprising to them, there was no reception where they were. So, they pulled out their handhelds and tried a local repeater. Brought it up no problems at all and someone was monitoring to provide communication assistance. The end of the story – the injured person was rescued within about an hour of initial discovery and it was all thanks to Ham Radio. In fact, had it not been for the couple bringing their handhelds, that person would have most likely died.

This article and scenario got me thinking – am I prepared? This was not a wide area emergency, was not a natural disaster, was not planned, and could happen to any of us. So, this isn't the kind of situation that we often think of when we hear "Amateur Radio Emergency Communications". But, the outcome was life altering...

My family has a Ham radio in most of our cars. Does everyone know how to use them? No, probably not. All of the licensed members of my family have handhelds. But, do we carry them everywhere we go? Usually not. Do all of us



know how to use the radios fully? Probably not. Do we have a listing of all the repeaters frequencies, tones, offsets, etc.? No (other than what is programmed into the radios). Do we always monitor 146.52 (the national simplex calling frequency)? Again, probably not. Should we? Absolutely!

This small article reminded me of what could be a life saving aspect of our hobby and what can set us apart from the general public. Since reading the article, I have made sure that

my wife carries her handheld with her while she goes to and from work. We usually carry them with us if we go out in the boonies, but now I want to make sure to carry them (or at least have a radio handy) everywhere we go. In fact, one of the reasons my wife even became a Ham was a situation where the cell phone network became overloaded and failed. (It was one of those bad snow storms that hit and everyone was on their cell phone...).

So, what am I doing to make sure we are prepared? I am making a repeater list to carry with each radio that will list all of the repeater frequencies in the area that we will be at, I am making a quick reference guide for the important features of the radio to carry with it, and I have 146.52 programmed into every one of our radios, including the scan banks that we normally run, among other things. I want to always be able to get communicate and I want to be in a position to assist other Hams as well.

Could you run your radio outside of the programmed memories? Do you know all of the repeaters in the area? How about an area where you may be visiting? Do you often monitor the national simplex frequency? Are you prepared?

73 for now,

Robert Kluck – N4IJS

# February Meeting Minutes

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MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 8, 2010  
MEETING OF THE NORTHERN KENTUCKY  
AMATEUR RADIO CLUB

I. Meeting called to order – 1935

II. New business

- Discussed membership in the Club
- Need to raise the number of paying members
- Goal for 2010 is for a total of 100 members
- Current membership stands at 33.
- Looking for ways to gain new members (more on this in future meetings)
- Discussed QSL cards received from Special Event Station.
- Received many QSLs. All have been responded to.
- If you wish to see any of them, please contact Robert Kluck, N4IJS.
- Donation to Church
- Club will be providing \$50 to the Church as a donation for use of their facility. During the March meeting, members will have the oppor-

tunity to assist financially with this donation. Whatever is not collected will come out of the Club's reserves.

III. Old Business

- Need to identify a Field Day chair
- Once identified, need to obtain Field Day Committee members.
- Fund Raising Committee being created. Dann Fox, KB4AVO, to Chair and Tony White, AI4IP, in on the committee. Need additional committee members.

IV. Adjournment

- Motioned by Dave, KI4QH, and seconded by Tony, AI4IP.
- Meeting adjourned at 1950.

Respectfully submitted by Robert Kluck, N4IJS

## February NKARC Net Report

DATE	NCS	CHECKINS	TIME (MINS)	TRAFFIC
2/2/10	AJ4DK (Don)	12	26	0
2/9/10	KB4VKS (Mike)	15	31	1
2/16/10	N4IJS (Robert)	14	25	0
2/23/10	KG4SBG (Dennis)	10	29	0
<b>TOTALS:</b>		<b>51</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>1</b>

# Mark's Mutterings

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## The Elecraft Effect

I had originally planned on titling this column “The Elecraft Experience”, but changed my mind when I stumbled across Yaesu’s tri-fold ad for their new [FTDX5000](#) HF transceiver in the January issue of QST. I think that Yaesu finally got tired of seeing their rigs bested in receiver [performance tests](#) by rigs from Elecraft, Ten-Tec, and more recently, Flex Radio.

Several decades ago, the Japanese manufacturers thought that they could improve their market share by adding general coverage capability to their receivers. The easiest way of achieving general coverage is to select a high first IF frequency, typically in the 70 MHz range. Then, a simple 30 MHz low-pass filter can be used to eliminate the images. The downside of this architecture is that it is difficult to achieve narrow selectivity at such high frequencies, so the real filtering was usually left for the later, lower frequency IF stages. Leaving the “front door” of the receiver open like this can lead to much unpleasantness, including [de-sense](#) — reduced sensitivity to weak, wanted signals by strong unwanted signals within the pass-band.

When Elecraft released their K2 kit transceiver ten years ago, they had an immediate hit on their hands. Not only could you build your own rig à la Heathkit, but because it down-converted to a low (4 MHz) first IF frequency, it could immediately bring very narrow crystal filtering to bear and achieve dynamic range figures superior to rigs costing thousands of dollars more! Elecraft wisely decided to eschew general coverage, and achieved good image reduction through the use of simple but effective switched bandpass filters for each ham band.

Eight years later, Elecraft introduced the K3, which added many creature comforts that had been missing from the K2. As with the K2, the K3 utilizes a low first IF, and roofing filters as narrow as 200 Hz are available. Second IF-stage DSP filtering can further reduce the bandwidth to 50

Hz. If you are a CW operator, this is as close to nirvana as you are likely to come! General coverage capability can be achieved by adding a module which adds additional bandpass filters for the areas outside the ham bands.

All of which brings us back to the ad for the FTDX5000. The first thing which caught my eye was the availability of a 300 Hz roofing filter and a claimed dynamic range of 112 dB. Hello! A bit of Googling confirmed that, after getting sand kicked in their face by TenTec and Elecraft for so many years, Yaesu had finally swallowed their pride and switched to a down-conversion design. Good on them! I look forward to the first independent lab tests to see whether Yaesu has managed to knock the K3 off of its lofty perch. Then, from the recently concluded Orlando Hamcation, comes a [rumor](#) that Kenwood will soon be introducing a “K3-class” transceiver. This is what I call “The Elecraft Effect”. With a starting price more than three times higher than the K3’s, I don’t think that the FTDX5000 will put a big dent in the K3’s market share, though.

Some will argue that this is all a bunch of nit-picking, and that the average ham is unlikely to notice the difference between a receiver with 90 dB of dynamic range and one with 100 dB of dynamic range. There is some truth in this, though if I was trying to pick a rare DX station out of a pile-up, I know which receiver I would want!

Receiver performance is just one factor in Elecraft’s success, though. Just as important, in my view, is the outstanding customer support they offer, and their responsiveness to complaints, questions and suggestions via their popular [email reflector](#). When was the last time you were able to communicate directly with one of the design engineers at YaeComWood? By the way, a wide range of topics are discussed in the reflector by some very knowledgeable hams, and even non-Elecrafters will find it educational.

73, Mark, AI4BJ



# Weaver's Words

## Did Someone Say Sunspot?

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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**

### Williams Appointed to ECAC

I am very pleased to announce the appointment of Michigan Section Manager Dale Williams, WA8EFK to represent the Great Lakes Division on the ARRL Emergency Communications Advisory Committee (ECAC). The ECAC was established by the ARRL Board of Directors at its January meeting.

As is true of other ARRL advisory committees, the ECAC will be composed of one representative from each of the 15 ARRL Divisions. This is the first ARRL advisory committee that is open to section managers as well as typical League members. Dale was among several qualified candidates considered for the post.



Thanks to Dale for his willingness to assist. I also thank other candidates who stood ready to serve.

The ECAC will advise the Board and HQ on matters related to multi-regional and nationwide emergency response planning.

### New MOU with Red Cross Offers Much

The new MOU between Red Cross and ARRL does much more than include an agreement to support RC and to acknowledge the appropriateness of criminal background checks for its ham supporters. When it is signed by both organizations it will provide a clear distinction between amateurs as official Red Cross volunteers and amateurs as partners but not RC volunteers. This should be a very helpful distinction. Basically it

means that amateurs can provide volunteer communications support to the community through RC without becoming RC volunteers if this is what they choose.

Why is this potentially an important distinction?

It has been my personal experience that RC chapter officials typically conclude anyone who provides support to them is a RC volunteer. This conclusion may be justifiable for "the man on the street" who walks in to a chapter house and says he wants to help. On the other hand, the conclusion may or may not be accurate regarding individual members of an ARES(TM) unit that also offers to help. The ARES member may, in fact, be volunteering to support ARES in its assistance to RC, but not be interested in being a RC volunteer.

One important feature of the new MOU is that it clearly distinguishes between ARES members and RC volunteers. ARRL and ARES are referred to as partners and in similar terms, not as RC volunteers. The MOU solidifies this distinction even further when it agrees that ARES amateurs should be encouraged to become RC volunteers and that RC amateurs who do not belong to ARRL/ARES should be encouraged to join these organizations.

Again, why is this distinction important?

As a RC volunteer, an individual may be required to sign certain agreements that are not required if the individual is not a RC volunteer. One agreement is the Intellectual Property Agreement that basically gives the RC first rights to ideas, inventions, developments, and other property developed by the individual even though these were not developed for Red Cross or as a direct result of being a RC volunteer. Those of you who work for major corporations may have signed a similar agreement with your employer to get a job and earn a living.

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I am aware of at least one local Chapter for which the Intellectual Property Agreement is a big issue. Many ARES members in its service area are very reluctant to sign the agreement, but are equally interested in providing valuable service to the community through the RC. They view the situation as being one of lose-lose.

Because the new MOU recognizes that ARES members do not need to become Red Cross volunteers, it should not be necessary for amateurs who choose not to be RC volunteers to sign the agreement. This same philosophy will apply to other requirements of RC volunteers.

Unfortunately, it may be necessary to wait until the new MOU is published to convince many RC chapter managers that radio operators are not required to become RC volunteers and, therefore, are not required to sign these agreements.

One final thought. Becoming an official RC volunteer may not be one-sided. This may depend on the specific chapter, but some chapters reimburse their volunteers (including amateurs) for certain expenses while performing RC duties. It would be justifiable for these reimbursements not to be offered to hams who choose not to be RC volunteers.

### **US ARDF Championships in Cincinnati**

The 2010 national ARDF (Amateur Radio Direction Finding) championships are in Cincinnati. The dates are May 19-23. These will be the tenth championships for the US.

This will be an especially good opportunity for amateurs in our area to see what competitive ARDF is about and why it is fun. A two-day training camp may be of particular interest to new and would-be ARDFers. An ARDF forum will also be held at the Dayton Hamvention™ the week before the championships.

To learn more about ARDFing, visit the 2010 ARDF Championships web site -- <http://www.usardf2010.com>. This site contains a good discussion of ARDFing as well as full information about the 2010 championships.

One interesting feature of the event is that individuals who have never participated in a US ARDF Championship may register without paying a competition fee. The ARDF community definitely wants to encourage new people to join it.

Bob Frey, WA6EZV of Hamilton, OH and Dick Arnett, WB4SUV of Erlanger, KY are co-chairmen of the 2010 Championships.



### **Repeater Narrow Banding under Review**

As many of us know, the FCC is pushing a variety of radiocommunication services toward digital narrowbanding. As one example that is somewhat related to Amateur Radio, the FCC is considering a rather major move in repeater spacing for the Land Mobile service. Land Mobile currently uses a 25 kHz spacing. FCC is talking about a plan that would reduce this spacing to 12.5 kHz on an interim basis and then to 6.25 kHz. The move to 12.5 kHz is being fought and no deadline has been proposed for 6.25 kHz, but the pressure toward narrowbanding exists.

It seems appropriate, therefore that we in Amateur Radio review the possibilities that would exist if we were to find narrowbanding in our future. It is always better to study a potential situation when there is plenty of time for the study than to wait until a deadline exists.

Consistent with this thinking, we on the ARRL Board passed the following resolution at the July 2009 Board meeting (Minute 29):

WHEREAS, there is current substantial amateur radio movement, activity, and innovation in the digital narrowband area; and

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WHEREAS, the FCC has mandated that by 2013 commercial radio move to narrowband channels and Amateur Radio manufacturers normally follow commercial practices; and

WHEREAS, the VHF/UHF Amateur Radio band plan currently uses 15 and 20 kHz FM channels; and

WHEREAS, with the increasing use of narrowband across the country amateurs are placing and using narrowband equipment outside the repeater subband because there is no real place to fit the narrowband pairs; and

WHEREAS, for ARRL to remain a respected leader in technology, we must be actively involved in innovative solutions to problems by bringing about a productive discussion on a technical paradigm shift; now

THEREFORE, the President shall appoint a study committee for the purpose of research and to consider developing a plan to move the US amateur community to narrowband channel spacing.

The Committee has begun its work. Please be aware that neither the Committee nor the Board are preparing to propose a shift to narrow band spacing. This is an information gathering effort. You will hear more in the future as the work progresses.

### **Comment Deadline Nears on Two NPRMs**

The comment deadline for two FCC Notice of Proposed Rule Making (NPRM) dockets is March 26. These NPRMs are intended to amend, clarify and codify certain existing procedures governing the amateur vanity call sign system (WT Docket No. 09-209) and to revise certain rules that apply to club stations (FCC No. 09-102). The two NPRMs and information needed to submit comment on them may be found at <http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2010/pdf/2010-1262.pdf>.

### **Field Day Cometh**

The annual Field Day exercise of emergency communications preparedness is June 26 and 27. Anything you ever wanted to know or needed to know about this annual exercise can be read or downloaded at

<http://www.arrl.org/contests/forms/fd-2010-packet.pdf>.

Why not invite your State or Federal senator and representative, EMA director or other public leaders to visit Field Day. If you do this, be sure to have literature that concisely describes Amateur Radio and the critical role amateurs play in emergency communication available to give to them. Some of this information is available to pick up at no charge at an ARRL booth at any ARRL-sanctioned hamfest.

### **Destroy Applications for Obsolete Credit Cards**

Individual amateurs and hamfest officials who have applications for ARRL credit cards that were distributed before February 22 please note. Toss these applications in the trash. Better still, put them in the paper recycle bin. These applications were made obsolete by the new credit card laws.

### **Chris Castle, another Honor**

Chris Castle, KI4BOQ, has received another honor. He has been named a WYMT-TV Mountain Achiever. Chris is a senior at Johnson Central High School, Paintsville, KY. He is the son of Patty and Ron Castle, KI4NM. The Castles live in West Van Lear, KY.

### **Directors Webinars -- What are These?**

What are the Directors webinars I've listed in the following Tentative Travel, Hamfest and Activity Schedule? These are monthly discussions I helped initiate by working with other members of the ARRL Board of Directors. The purpose of these monthly discussions is to bring directors together frequently to promote full exchange of ideas, problems and experiences throughout the year. Participants in the webinars believe that members, the staff and the Board will benefit from these frequent discussions.

Incidentally, members of the Great Lakes Division Cabinet periodically hold teleconferences to discuss



items of interest to the Division and Sections. These are not listed below because they occur on an as-desired basis and generally do not fit the publication schedule of Words. The Division Cabinet consists of SMs WA8EFK, KY4Z and KI8GW, Division Legislative Action Chairman NB4K, Vice Director KI4LA and your Director.

### **Tentative Travel, Hamfest and Activity 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. Hamfests, conventions, symposia and similar events sponsored by ARRL-affiliated clubs may be eligible to be sanctioned by the League. For information, see <http://www.arrl.org/FandES/field/hamfests/Sponsors>. Please have your event sanctioned soon.

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 Mar: Directors webinar - 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  
24 Apr: River Cities ARA Tail-Gate 'fest, Ashland, KY  
25 Apr: Athens Hamfest, Athens, OH  
26 Apr: Livonia ARC meeting - presentation, Jim  
27 Apr: Cherryland ARC meeting - presentation, Jim  
28 Apr: Directors webinar - Jim  
1 May: Louisa Hamfest, Louisa, KY - Jim  
1 May: Cadillac Hamfest, Cadillac, MI  
14-16 May: Hamvention(r), Dayton, OH - Gary, Jim  
26 May: Directors webinar - Jim  
5 Jun: IRA Hamfest, Hudsonville, MI  
5 Jun: Fulton Co. ARC Hamfest, Tedrow, OH

5 Jun: Carter Co. Hamfest, Olive Hill, KY  
6 Jun: Chelsea Swap & Shop, Chelsea, MI  
19 Jun: Milford Hamfest, Milford, OH - Jim  
19 Jun: Midland Hamfest, Midland, MI  
20 Jun: Monroe Hamfest, Monroe, MI -- Jim  
23 Jun: Directors webinar - Jim  
8 Jul: Mahoning Valley ARA, presentation -- Jim  
15 Jul: A&F Committee, Newington, CT - Jim  
16-17 Jul: Board of Directors, Windsor, CT -- Gary, Jim  
18 Jul: Van Wert ARC Hamfest, Van Wert, OH  
25 Jul: Portage Hamfair, Randolph, OH  
28 Jul: Directors webinar - Jim  
7 Aug: UP Hamfest, Escanaba, MI  
15 Aug: Warren ARA Hamfest, Cortland, OH  
15 Aug: Central KY Hamfest, Lawrenceburg, KY - Jim  
15 Aug: Lapeer Swap & Shop, Lapeer, MI  
22 Aug: Cambridge Hamfest, Cambridge, OH  
25 Aug: Directors webinar - Jim  
11 Sep: Grtr Louisville 'fest, Shepherdsville, KY  
12 Sep: Findlay Hamfest, Findlay, OH - Jim  
18 Sep: Central KY ARS Hamfest, Richmond, KY - Jim  
19 Sep: Adrian ARC Hamfest, Adrian, MI  
22 Sep: Directors webinar - Jim  
26 Sep: Cleveland Hamfest, Cleveland, OH - Jim  
27 Oct: Directors webinar - Jim  
30 Oct: Hazard Hamfest, Hazard, KY  
31 Oct: Massillon Hamfest, Massillon, OH

### **Programmer Needed!**

The Great Lakes Division is seeking a computer programmer who is willing to donate effort to develop or modify a program that can be used to personalize and print letters from stored files. Some files would be on the local computer; others would be available on line. We have a program that will perform the necessary functions on a limited basis. It will be very helpful if this program can be upgraded to provide increased flexibility or if a replacement program is written.

If you would like to learn more about this project, please let me know when I can call you. We are an equal opportunity beggar.

The pay? A lot of gratitude.

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Volume 2010 Issue 3**