



# The Feedline

## The Big Wet

By Mark Volstad, AI4BJ

As I mentioned in the May Feedline, my plan was to participate in Field Day from the campground at Big Bone Lick State Park this year. As soon as my son Bruce got off from work on Friday afternoon, we headed off for Big Bone to set up the tents. My wife, Lylah, and 17-year-old daughter, Angie, showed up a couple of hours later with a large care package from City BBQ, and we feasted.

The camp site I had reserved was close to the highest point in the park. Unfortunately, the only level ground on the site was the pea gravel driveway, so that is where we set up the tents. The weather was perfect for camping — cool and low humidity. A camp fire held off the chill until we were ready to sleep. Now, I'm used to primitive camping in the backcountry where the only sounds I hear at night are the insects and Whip-poor-wills, so I was worried about how noisy a modern, sold-out campground would be. I was pleasantly surprised by how quiet it got by 11:30. No barking dogs, no generators, and thanks to the cool weather, no air-conditioners!

I was up by first light on Saturday, and by the time the rest of the family was up, I had prepared a mess of scrambled eggs, fried potatoes, onions and sausages. This feat was achieved not over the glowing embers of the previous night's campfire, nor even on a camp stove, but with the use of an electric skillet. I have to admit, car-camping does have its conveniences!

There was plenty of time for a hike before

I had to start setting up for Field Day, so we headed off on the trail that leads down to the bison herd. After the hike, my kids helped me to set up the new vertical diamond loop antenna that I described in the May Feedline. I moved the larger dome tent under the shade of a large sycamore, and in less than an hour my station was ready for action. I would be operating in class 1B (commercial), which means I was operating from a remote location, using commercial power. My family headed home — the plan was that I would spend the second night camping alone.

At 2:00 p.m., right on schedule, the bands burst into life. To me, it's the most wonderful sound in Amateur Radio. A cacophony of CW, phone and digital signals from the top to the bottom of each band! As hoped-for with the return of the sunspots, both the 15 and 10 meter bands were wide open, taking a lot of pressure off of 40 and 20 meters. Strangely, all the bands were

Continued on page 6

### July Program

Robert Kluck, N4IJS, will present a program on DVAP (Digital Voice Access Point) at the July meeting of the Northern Kentucky Amateur Radio Club. Join us at 7:30 p.m., Monday, July 11 at the Hilltop Church of Christ in Taylor Mill.

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#### Dates to Remember:

- July 9,10—[IARU HF Championship](#)
- July 11 — NKARC membership meeting
- July 30 — Deadline for August Feedline submissions
- Aug 8 — NKARC 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.

**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 [VETesting@k4co.org](mailto:VETesting@k4co.org) 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-

dress or call changes and circulation problems may be sent to the Feedline editor:

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# Top of the Tower

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(the Top of the Tower was not available by the deadline for Feedline submissions)

## June NKARC Net Report

(the net report was not available by the deadline for Feedline submissions)

## June Meeting Minutes

(the meeting minutes were not available by the deadline for Feedline submissions)

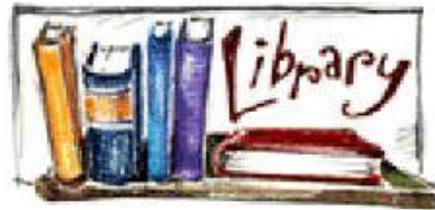
### **WANTED: New or Experienced Net Control Stations!**

NKARC is looking for two Amateur Radio operators and members of NKARC to help with our weekly VHF Net. The ideal candidate would have a desire for operating their radios. The rest of the requirements can be acquired through training which we will happily provide. If you are interested, please contact Robert, N4IJS.

### **WANTED: Feedline Articles!**

Do you have a story to tell that is even remotely related to amateur radio? Then why not submit it for publication in The Feedline? It can be as short or as long as you like. If you're concerned that your spelling or grammar may not be up to snuff, don't worry — we don't care about that stuff. Seriously, I can help "clean it up" if you are concerned about that. You can submit your article via email or snail mail — my contact info is on page 2. Or, you can hand it to me in person at a club meeting.

Mark, AI4BJ



The following items are currently available for loan to NKARC members:

#### General Items

- ARRL Antenna Book - 21st Edition, 2nd Printing with CD
- ARRL 2011 Handbook with CD
- ARRL Operating Manual (9th Edition)
- ARRL Repeater Directory (2010-2011 Edition)
- ARRL PIC Programming Book (with CD)

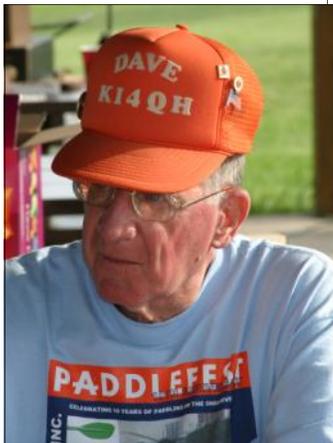
#### Study Guides

- ARRL Ham Radio License Manual (2nd Edition)
- ARRL General Class License Manual (7th Edition)
- ARRL Amateur Extra Class License Manual (9th Edition)



## NKARC/KD7ARET Field Day 2011

Photography by Greg May, W2ORO



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## Field Day, Cont'd from Cover

very short on Saturday afternoon. Of course, in Field Day there are no geographic multipliers, so it doesn't really matter whether the station you are working is in the next county or three time zones away. With every band open, there was no shortage of stations to work! It just seemed strange that I was able to work so many nearby states (KY, IN, TN, WV) so early in the day. Typically, I don't work these states until I drop down to 40 meters in the evening. The Rockies seemed to form an impenetrable RF barrier, and I only managed to work a couple of CA stations before nightfall. To my surprise, my wife and daughter re-appeared around supertime. It seems that they had enjoyed camping so much the previous night that they had come back for more!

By this time, the weather forecast was becoming a bit less rosy. The humidity was rising, and there was a chance of overnight showers or thunderstorms. To avoid disturbing my wife and daughter's sleep I decided to sleep alone in the large radio tent, while they slept in the smaller dome tent about twenty feet away. That way, I could get up and play radio whenever I felt like it during the night. I was bushed, though, and at 10:30 I hit the sack. I slept quite well, despite being on a slope and constantly sliding towards the lower end of the tent.

At around 4:00 a.m., I awoke to the combined sounds of distant thunder and my wife's disembodied voice, requesting an escort down to the public washrooms. By the time we returned to the tents, the thunder was noticeably louder. Since my wife's tent was set up on the driveway, I had not been able to stake it down, and I was concerned that the fly over the mesh roof would blow away in a stiff wind. I quickly improvised some anchors using a toolbox and a heavy hammer, and we each retreated to our tents. The rain began at around 4:30. There were a couple of close lightning strikes, but most of the thunder was the extra deep, rolling thunder that just seems to go on and on and on.

The rain got heavier. I turned my flashlight on and checked for leaks. There were leaks. Water was dripping from the seam in the fly through the mesh roof right into the center of the tent. I began taking my station apart and moving everything that I could into the corners of the tent. That's when I noticed that water

was also leaking in through the seams where the tent walls meet the floor. Any water that reached the floor of the tent would run in little rivulets to the low end of the tent, where a small lake was forming. I quickly came up with an un-Christian name for this lake, and took shelter on top of my little rubber air mattress.

At this point, I began to take note of loud utterances and a general tone of unhappiness from the adjacent tent. I peeked through one of my windows through the driving rain and saw Angie wringing the water out of a towel through the door of her tent. Minutes later, I witnessed my wife making a mad dash for the car to retrieve an umbrella. By the time she got back to her tent, there could not have been anything left to keep dry. We toughed it out until daybreak, but when I heard my wife starting to cough in fits, I issued orders for her to abandon ship and go home with Angie to dry out. I stuck around for another hour, but the rain showed no sign of stopping, so I hauled most of my gear to my car and headed home myself for breakfast and a shower. On the way out of the park, I was astounded to find that the whole bottom of the park had been turned into a lake by the overflowing creek. I later learned that two inches of rain had fallen!



The rain finally stopped at around 11:00, and I returned to the park to take down my antenna, wring out the soggy sleeping bags, and pack up the tents.

I ended up with only 140 QSOs from the previous day. On the bright side, the K3 performed great, as did my new loop antenna. I put the K3's DVR (digital voice recorder) to good use calling CQ for me, and I'm confident that, had the weather cooperated, I would have set a new personal best for Field Day. I had an opportunity to explain what amateur radio is about to quite a few fellow campers who wanted to know what the big "wire thingy" was about.

About the tents: I learned that any tent picked up from a blue light special at Kmart is not going to remain dry in anything more than a light shower. I intend to seal all of the seams with [seam-sealer](#) before I take them into potentially wet conditions again.

Fortunately, my wife and daughter were good sports about everything. They thought that it was all a grand adventure! I did too, and on the way home, tired and wet, I was already planning for Field Day 2012!

# Weaver's Words

## Another Hamvention in the Books

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**Jim Weaver, K8JE**  
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### Homebrew Challenge Issued

The art of homebrewing amateur equipment is not dead. To help keep it strong, ARRL sponsors homebrewing contests annually. The following information relates to the 2011 contest.

“The ARRL has sponsored two Homebrew Challenges in the past, designed to test our members' design and construction skills by making useful amateur gear at low cost -- and sharing their results with our members. Our first ARRL Homebrew Challenge, announced in QST for August 2006, required the construction of a 40 meter, 5 W voice and CW transceiver built for less than \$50 of new parts. The Second Homebrew Challenge, announced in February 2009, resulted in a number of creative designs of low cost 50 W linear amplifiers to follow the transceiver -- two for about \$30, as well as a multi-band amplifier with many features for somewhat more.



“For 2011, the ARRL has issued a challenge to build a transceiver in celebration of the (slow) return of sunspots. This challenge will be in two parts and hams can enter either or both options:

“Option 1: A single band 25 W SSB and CW transceiver for 10 or 6 meters, with a prize of \$200.

Option 2: A 25 W SSB and CW transceiver that can be switched between 10 and 6 meters, using one or two switches, with a prize of \$300.

“Instead of challenging entrants to make the transceiver at the lowest cost, the ARRL will instead challenge builders to provide the highest quality, best performance and most features within the cost target of \$150

for Option 1 and \$200 for Option 2. In addition to the cash prize, the winners of these challenges will have articles describing their designs in QST and will receive the usual page rate for the published articles. Additional entrants who meet the minimum requirements — and have interesting design features — may also be considered for QST or ARRL Web articles.

“Entries for either option must be received at ARRL Headquarters no later than November 1, 2011. To be considered, each entrant must submit a working transceiver that is suitable for testing in the ARRL Lab and for on-the-air judging by the ARRL staff judges. Documentation required includes a priced parts list indicating the source and purchase price of each part, an article draft including a design description, construction hints, alignment instruction, block diagrams and schematic diagrams. Photographs may be provided, but final magazine photos will be taken by ARRL staff.

“For more information, including specific requirements and evaluation criteria, please visit the ARRL Homebrew Challenge web page.”

### Amateur Radio Comic Books Available

Writing in The Ham Radio Promoter, Dee Logan, W1HEO, reminds that several Amateur Radio comic books are available for use with youngsters. These can be gotten online from ICOM. The Zack and Max comics are at

[http://www.icomamerica.com/en/amateur/comic\\_book/Default.aspx](http://www.icomamerica.com/en/amateur/comic_book/Default.aspx). The comics may be read online, downloaded and printed, or copies may be requested from ICOM.

### The Status of HR 607

HR 607 is titled the Broadband for First Responders bill. Unfortunately, one of the bill's clauses would take the amateur 420-440 MHz frequencies in achieving its

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otherwise excellent objective.

Upon being introduced into the House, the bill was referred to the House Energy and Commerce Committee. To date, the subcommittee has taken no action. In addition, in a meeting with a group of amateur constituents the bill's sponsor, Rep. Peter King of New York, has stated he no longer favors taking the amateur frequencies. Finally, alternative bills having the same objective as HR 607, but that do not involve amateur frequencies, have been introduced into the House as well as the US Senate.

Considering the above facts, one can easily speculate that the present threat to 420-440 MHz may be over. Using only the letter generating utility developed by Rick Haltermon, KD4PYR, amateurs are known to have generated over 13,000 letters in opposition to the potential frequency grab. What a great response to the call for action!

As tempting as it is to speculate on victory, it is more important that amateurs keep an eye on HR 607 and other bills that could impact our frequencies. This is precisely what is being done by legislation watchers at ARRL.

For now, it is appropriate to sheathe our pens, but to keep them primed and handy to use if the need arises.

### **Division Convention Coming**

September 11, the day of the Great Lakes Division Convention at the Findlay Hamfest will be on us soon. In particular, the time for submitting nominations for Division Awards is approaching rapidly. Nominations must be received by August 1. There are five Award open for nomination. These are:

- the George S. Wilson III (W4OYI, SK), Lifetime Achievement Award
- the Amateur of the Year Award
- the Technical Achievement Award
- the DX Achievement Award
- the Young Radio Amateur of the Year Award

Also to be presented is the Joseph J. Phillips (K8QOE, SK) Newsletter Award. This award is selected from the newsletters that have been judged, previously, to be the best in each Section in the Division.

For additional information about the awards and how to nominate people for them, please go to the Great Lakes Division web site (<http://arrl-greatlakes.org/>) and click on the AWARDS icon at the left of the opening screen. Nominations may be made as hard copy or using the online form on the web site.



The Great Lakes Division Convention is being held on the grounds of the Findlay Hamfest. Admission to the hamfest provides admission to the convention. An interesting series of forums will begin at 9 AM. The convention will end with presentation of the awards at an informal luncheon near the hamfest grounds.

### **Division Elections this Fall**

As announced in QST, elections for director and vice director of the Great Lakes Division will be held this fall. At this time, I know of only one candidate for each of these positions.

### **Red Cross-ARRL Memorandum of Understanding - Where it Stands**

On May 25, 2010, the American Red Cross (RC) and the ARRL signed a new Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). This new MOU replaced one that had expired many months earlier. Significantly, the new MOU put the decision of where a ham can get the RC-required background check done squarely in the hands of the amateur. The new agreement gives a ham the privilege of having a criminal background check done through a local government agency such as police and sheriff rather than only through the commercial organization, Mybackgroundcheck.com, used by the RC.

There is a technical and potentially practical reason why many amateurs, including me did not want to have

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the check done through Mybackgroundcheck.com. This reason is that in authorizing Mybackgroundcheck.com to perform a background check, we officially authorize them to perform a manner of living check and a financial check -- not merely a criminal check. There may be situations in which RC would need to have these added background checks run. These situations would arise only in instances in which an individual wishes to perform tasks that far exceed those of a simple communicator.

My personal position is that I do not care to become a Red Cross "volunteer" as RC defines this term. I wish only to be able to provide communications support to the agency in emergencies. I do not wish to become a RC relief worker or a shelter manager or stores manager or work at levels which inherently would categorize me as a "volunteer" in RC's terminology. I understand RC's need to perform more invasive background checking on many volunteer positions and have no problem with this. I just don't want to open my personal history any more than is needed to accomplish my personal goals.

I recently spoke with officials of the Cincinnati Region Red Cross and was informed they were unaware of the new (or, for that matter, the old) MOU with ARRL. Consequently, they were not prepared to allow me to serve the local Chapter without undergoing a background check as described in RC guidelines. It would seem that National RC may not have notified local chapters of the new MOU and of the liberalized background check policy it contains.

I shared a copy of the RC-ARRL MOU with the local chapter. After reviewing the document, I was told they indeed will accept the results of a criminal background check-only that I plan to have done through my county sheriff's department. I will not become a RC "volunteer," but I will be credentialed to provide communications support which is my objective.

My reason for passing the above information on is to assure anyone interested that the MOU is being accepted even though additional effort may be needed to make local officials aware of it. To obtain a copy of the RC-ARRL MOU, go to <http://www.arrl.org/files/media/News/ARRL->

[ARC MoU.pdf](#). It is in Adobe Acrobat format and is signed by Joseph C. Becker, Senior Vice President, Disaster Services of the RC and by Kay Craigie (N3KN), President of ARRL. If needed, the MOU can be forwarded to a local RC official to demonstrate its existence.

### **Today's Final**

It's been a busy time at the K8JE QTH recently. Mixed in among other activities, a new tower has been put up, and a TH-11DX monster beam and an M2-5X 6 meter beam have been assembled. The antenna "uprising" is scheduled for July 6 — thanks to a friendly tower technician and several fellow amateurs. All this work was necessitated by a gust of wind that brought tower, beams, wire antenna and two Ringos crashing down one early morning in late February.

According to the note I made on the assembly/instruction manual, I had assembled my previous TH-11 in 1996. For some reason, my memory tells me the amount of work required to put it together was far less than the effort required to assemble the new one. The other disparity between then and now is that somehow I managed to climb the first tower the old TH-11 adorned and, with the help of just one friend on the ground, managed getting it properly mounted. This time, I'm looking at a ground crew of about four buddies plus the tower monkey.

Something seems to have changed over the last 15 years. I'll figure out what — some day.

### **Schedule of Sanctioned Hamfests, and Tentative Activity and Travel**

As of press time, hamfests in the following list have received ARRL sanctioning. Hamfests and other events for which a Great Lakes Division representative is scheduled to attend are identified with the representative's name.

For information on sponsoring and sanctioning a hamfest or convention, go to [www.arrl.org/hamfest-sponsor-support](http://www.arrl.org/hamfest-sponsor-support). To have your hamfest sanctioned, go

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to <http://www.arrl.org/hamfest-convention-application> to apply on line. Hamfests are already being sanctioned for 2012! Please be sure to read the requirements for having an event sanctioned before submitting a request.

Please remember to order free brochures from ARRL for your hamfest. These brochures are to be displayed on the table you provide for ARRL use per your agreement to become a sanctioned hamfest. The procedure for obtaining these free goodies is described in the letter you received along with the free prize certificates sent from HQ. There is no shipping charge for the freebies provided one follows the simple procedure when ordering them.

8-10 Jul: Michigan Family Outing symposium, Hale, MI - Jim

14 Jul: A&F Committee Meeting, Newington, CT - Jim

15-16 Jul: Board of Directors Meeting, Newington, CT - Gary, Jim

16 Jul: NOARSFEST, Elyria, OH

17 Jul: Van Wert Hamfest, Van Wert, OH

31 Jul: Portage Hamfair 11, Randolph, OH - Gary

6 Aug: Voice of Aladdin Hamfest, Columbus, OH - Jim

6 Aug: UP Hamfest, Escanaba, MI

7 Aug: Cuyahoga Falls ARC Tailgatefest, Stow, OH

14 Aug: Central Kentucky ARRL Hamfest, Lawrenceburg, KY - Jim

14 Aug: Lapeer County Swap & Shop, Lapeer, MI

21 Aug: Warren ARC Hamfest, Cortland, OH - Jim

27 Aug: SARA Swap & Trunk Sale, Owosso, MI

28 Aug: Cambridge ARA Hamfest, Cambridge, OH - Jim

10 Sep: Louisville Sunrise Hamfest, Shepherdsville, KY

10 Sep: GRAHamfest 2011, Wyoming, MI

11 Sep: Great Lakes Division Convention/Findlay Hamfest, Findlay, OH

(QSL Checking) - Gary, Jim

17 Sep: Richmond Hamfest, Richmond, KY - Jim

18 Sep: GCARA Hamfest, Cincinnati, OH (QSL Checking)- Jim

18 Sep: Adrian ARC Hamfest, Adrian, MI

25 Sep: Cleveland Hamfest & Computer Show, Berea, OH - Jim

4 Oct: OH-KY-IN Meeting, Cincinnati, OH - Jim

16 Oct: Kalamazoo Hamfest, Kalamazoo, MI (QSL Checking)

23 Oct: 26th Annual USECA Hamfest, Sterling Heights, MI

29 Oct: Hazard Hamfest, Hazard, KY

30 Oct: Massillon Hamfest, Massillon, OH

Return to:  
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