



# New Member Packet

Mahoning Valley Amateur Radio Association

[www.MVARA.org](http://www.MVARA.org)

Hello, and welcome! As a new member of the Mahoning Valley Amateur Radio Association (AKA the MVARA), the Board of Directors and fellow members wish to thank you for joining us.

What is now the MVARA started in 1919 shortly after WWI. It was then known as The Youngstown Radio Club and like the rest of the country, Hams in the Youngstown area were just getting used to being on the air again after the radio blackout imposed during the war. Likewise, the ARRL was gearing up again and the MVARA became an ARRL Affiliated Club in 1925, making us the oldest ARRL Affiliated Club in the Ohio Section.

MVARA operates the 146.745Mhz repeater, arguably the strongest repeater in the area. The repeater and antenna are located at the WKBN Broadcast Facility, although the repeater was located at several other sites before landing at WKBN.

MVARA uses the repeater for the weekly **GAIN –Good News and Information Net** that meets Monday evenings at 9:00 pm. The Net is open to any licensed amateur radio operator and encourages you to check in every week. In addition to check ins, information is given on club meeting programs, future events and Swap N Shop. The repeater is also home to the Mahoning County ARES and Skywarn nets.

The club holds a number of social and operating events each year. The high point of the social calendar is the annual “Corn Roast” held in Boardman Park in August. Operating events include Special Event Stations such as the annual station set up for the Mahoning Valley Olde Car Club also in August as well as participation in the Ohio QSO Party, Ohio State Parks on the Air, MVARA Boot Camp, and ARES NVIS Day. We also do numerous Public Service events including the Mill Creek Distance Classic run, Silly Science Sunday, The Youngstown Christmas Parade and Tree Lighting, and the Celebrate Poland Parade.

Our meetings of the club membership are on the second Thursday of each month, and currently are held at the GOP Meeting Room in Boardman. Again, we welcome you and hope the following pages provide a better understanding of who we are.

Sincerely,

Ralph Streb President, MVARA

# 2026 MVARA Officers & Trustees

President Ralph Streb K8TCP

Vice President Mark Haverstock K8MSH

Secretary Richard Slutz KB8GAE

Treasurer Nancy Brett KD8QNY

Trustee Andy Brincko WA8ZLK

Trustee Dave Brett KD8NZF

Trustee Don George W8DPG

Trustee Doug Sage KB8TPG

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MVARA Website:  
<http://www.mvara.org>

MVARA Facebook:  
<https://www.facebook.com/mahvalradio/>

# Are you new to Amateur Radio?

If so, this section is for you. If not, read it anyway, there is probably something here you've forgotten!

OK, you have your Technician ticket, Now What?

First, Wait. You need to wait until you have your callsign. Without it you can't legally transmit. Within a couple days of passing your technician test, the FCC will issue your call sign. You can absolutely get a radio and start listening though! Listen to our weekly net, the ARES net, and the Skywarn net. Download a Band Plan <http://www.arrl.org/band-plan> from the ARRL website and start looking at the different activities that are available to your class of license.

Most technicians start with a radio that operates 2m/70cm (commonly called "dual band") or just the 2m band. Both of these are line of sight frequencies, meaning using radio to radio communication, you can barely go beyond the horizon. Because of that our club maintains the 146.745 repeater which increases the range of even a handheld (HT) to up to 50 miles. Setting up your radio to work with a repeater is a whole new can of worms and the exact procedure will depend on the brand of your radio. But at the least you need to learn about Repeater Splits and Tone Coded Squelch (PL). Our repeater uses a split of -600 Khz and a PL tone of 110.9 Hz. If these ideas are new to you, we will be glad to explain and help you set up your radio.

There is no substitute for listening to traffic on the local repeaters for learning the procedures, but there are some common mistakes/suggestions for the new the repeater users:

- Ker-chunking: This is when you key up the mic, but don't say anything. You will hear this all the time, but it is not recommended. If you are testing, just say it. Ex: "(your callsign), testing radio."
- If there is a conversation going on and you would like to join, just say your callsign during a pause.
- Leave a pause between transmissions. 1-2 seconds is usually enough. That way if someone wants to join, they can.
- It is against the law to use offensive language. Don't do it.

## Operating Common Practice.

No matter what your favorite operating mode is, you will find some practices that apply to all:

Q Codes – Here are just a few of the common ones, for a complete list check the ARRL website.

QTH	Home Location	QSL	Did You Copy?
QRZ	Who is Calling?	QSO	A Contact
QSY	Change Frequency	QST	A Message is Coming
QRM	Man Made Interference	QRN	Natural Interference
QRT	Shutting Down the Station	QRV	I Am Ready to Receive

## Phonetic Alphabet

A--Alpha	N--November
B--Bravo	O--Oscar
C--Charlie	P--Papa
D--Delta	Q--Quebec
E--Echo	R--Romeo
F--Foxtrot	S--Sierra
G--Golf	T--Tango
H--Hotel	U--Uniform
I--India	V--Victor
J--Juliett	W--Whiskey
K--Kilo	X--X-ray
L--Lima	Y--Yankee
M--Mike	Z--Zulu

# Field Day

**Field Day is ham radio's open house.** Every June, more than 40,000 hams throughout North America set up temporary transmitting stations in public places to demonstrate ham radio's science, skill and service to our communities and our nation. It combines public service, emergency preparedness, community outreach, and technical skills all in a single event. Field Day has been an annual event since 1933 and remains the most popular event in ham radio.



MVARA participates in Field Day each year. The past few years we have set up at the Mill Creek MetroParks Farm on Route 46 in Canfield. We convert one of their barns into a huge radio operating event, with radios in the barn and antennas in the surrounding area. We typically will have anywhere from 8 – 10 antennas and at least 6 operating positions.

Field day is always the fourth full weekend in June and Field Day runs from 2:00pm Saturday to 2:00pm Sunday. The Field Day rules allow preparation to start on Friday and we try to have all antennas erected on Friday, leaving Saturday morning to set up the stations. It takes lots of manpower to get everything going and your help is needed. The radios run continuously for the 24hr operating period and you are invited to join in. It's a great time to get your feet wet with HF. Under FCC rules, Amateurs can operate with the privileges of a higher license as long as there is a Control Operator present that has the higher ticket. We will have lots of Control Operators and you can get on HF. Oh, did we mention there's always lots of Food?



# Corn Roast

Each August the members of MVARA get together in Boardman Park for our Corn Roast and Picnic. The club springs for Corn, Burgers, Hot Dogs and Condiments. Attendees are asked to bring a side dish and/or dessert to share, and a serving spoon or fork for your dish. We have a dedicated crew of chefs that cook corn by the bushel and burgers by the bundle. Sometimes we just have a low-key event, solving all the worlds problems over a hot dog, and other times we have an activity.



## Education and Youngstown Schools STEAM

We offer annual technician and general license classes and have instructors available all year long to assist anyone looking to obtain or upgrade their amateur license. After you have your ticket the club can help you set up a station and get on the air to join the fun. Our equipment loaner program lets you borrow transceivers and antennas while you are getting started.



The Youngstown City Schools STEAM Science Technology Engineering Arts and Math program has been working with the MVARA to introduce middle school students to amateur radio and all the different skills and technologies involved.

We have done presentations on high frequency and very high frequency radio and antennas which let the students talk to hams in the area and around the world. The modulation demonstration shows them the circuitry and wave forms involved with signal modulation. Digital radio showcases DMR and Fusion which lets the students use radio and internet to talk around the globe. Our most popular presentation is on Morse code, Students learn how to send their name and find it a cool way to communicate.

## Elmers

In Amateur Radio folks that like to help new Hams are known as Elmers. It's the same idea as a Mentor. We are fortunate to have many Mentors in our club and will be happy to put you in touch.

## QRZ

Amateur Radio is all over the internet, but QRZ is one of those websites that is just so important we need to make sure you know about it. The website is <https://www.qrz.com/> . QRZ's primary resource is its database of Amateurs. By entering a Ham's callsign you can learn information about the Ham such as the level of license and where they are located (their QTH). Many Hams also create a page on QRZ about their interests and station. They also feature an online Swap & Shop, numerous forums, practice exams, grid mapper, and the latest news relevant to Amateur Radio.

## DXSummit

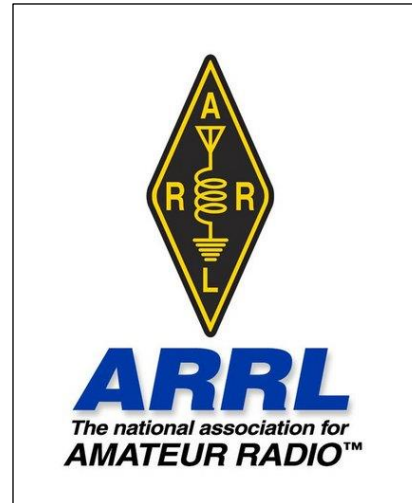
DXSummit is what is generally called a cluster. It is one of the better-known clusters and is used for spotting. If you have any interest in Contesting, QSO Parties, or Special Events you should check out DXSummit. On their page you will see a constantly updating list of stations that have been worked around the world. You can find them here: <http://www.dxsummit.fi/#/>

## DX Engineering

We are fortunate to have DX Engineering right in our back yard. Commonly known as DXE, they are a large retailer of Amateur Gear, but they are also much more. If you are familiar with the Summit Racing Equipment Company near Tallmadge, Ohio, it's the same folks. The owners of Summit are Amateurs and started DXE. They have attracted a staff of top-notch Amateurs, led by Tim Duffy, K3LR, probably the most recognized name in Amateur Contesting. For more information please see their website: [www.dxengineering.com](http://www.dxengineering.com) .

# ARRL

**ARRL.** The ARRL is the national association for Amateur Radio in the US. Founded in 1914 by Hiram Percy Maxim as The American Radio Relay League, ARRL is a noncommercial organization of radio amateurs. ARRL numbers within its ranks the vast majority of active radio amateurs in the nation and has a proud history of achievement as the standard-bearer in amateur affairs.



ARRL is the resource for Amateurs. They serve as a national voice to the FCC and Federal/Local government. The list of reference materials they publish is too large to repeat here, but the pinnacle of their materials is ARRL Handbook for Radio Communications. The Handbook is a very comprehensive, professional quality, work and is frequently cited in publications in industry related to RF.

In addition to publishing, ARRL works tirelessly to provide operating aids and opportunities for Amateurs. W1AW is the world class Amateur station maintained at ARRL HQ and all Amateurs are invited to visit and operate the station. For more information on the vast resources available from ARRL please visit their website: [www.arrl.org](http://www.arrl.org)

# Emergency Organizations

**ARES.** The Amateur Radio Emergency Service® (ARES) consists of licensed amateurs who have voluntarily registered their qualifications and equipment, with their local ARES leadership, for communications duty in the public service when disaster strikes.



Every licensed amateur, regardless of membership in ARRL or any other local or national organization is eligible to apply for membership in ARES. Training may be required or desired to participate fully in ARES. Because ARES is an Amateur Radio program, only licensed radio amateurs are eligible for membership. For more information please visit the Mahoning County ARES website: <http://www.mahoning-ares.org/>

**SKYWARN.** SKYWARN is the National Weather Service network of volunteer citizens, public service and emergency management people working to provide the National Weather Service (NWS) with first-hand weather spotting observations during severe weather events.



In this area of the United States the primary severe weather threat comes from Severe Thunderstorms, Tornados and flooding from heavy rains. Amateur Radio Operators, or "Hams", participate not only as spotters, but also provide the communications infrastructure to rapidly, reliably and accurately get severe weather reports into the hands of the classes. For more information, please visit the Mahoning County Skywarn website: <http://www.mahoningskywarn.org/>