Mahoning Valley Amateur Radio Association Voice Coil

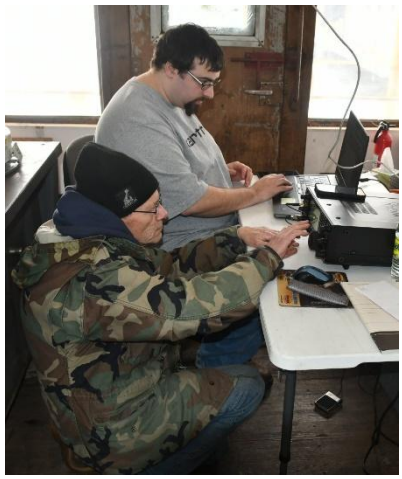
November 2026	mvara.w8qly@gmail.com	The Voice Coil - Volume 26-11

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President	Ralph Streb K8TCP
Vice President	Mark Haverstock K8MSH
Secretary	Rich Slutz KB8GAE
Treasurer	Nancy Brett KD8QNY

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Webmaster	Rich Slutz KB8GAE
Newsletter	Dave Brett KD8NZF
VE	Mark Haverstock K8MSH



President's Corner

Hey Everyone, Hope everyone has had a good Halloween and spooky month! I've personally been dealing with the allergies that come along with the Fall temperature swings, colder at night, but luckily, we're still seeing moderately nice afternoons. Get that outside work done while the weather is still nice!

November is the club's annual meeting; We'll be voting on more COR and ByLaws changes as well as voting in our new Trustees, Treasurer and Vice President. As it stands no one was running opposed, so congratulations to those that were nominated and thank you for serving the club! That's all I have this month, hope to see everyone at the meeting!
73s
Ralph Streb - K8TCP
President, MVARA

Upcoming MVARA Events

Date	Event	Location
November 4, 2026	License Testing	Boardman
November 12, 2026	MVARA Elections	Boardman
December 10, 2026	Christmas Party	Boardman

October Club Program

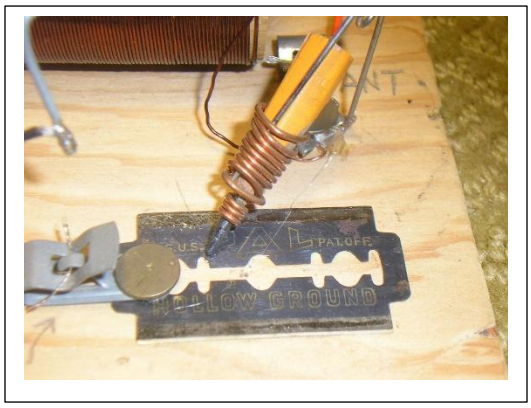


Because the club does elections in November, we originally did not plan to have a program for the meeting. In the October meeting we discovered there were no contested positions to be elected. We do have a number of motions to be considered, but we will still have time for a program, and just in the nick of time, Mark K8MSH and Ed KE8NSW jumped up to provide a program. They have been exploring DMR and some things have changed in the hardware since DMR first came on the scene. They will be showing us several avenues to getting on DMR and talking about why we should consider it. When DMR first popped up, there was a lot of fuss about it, but that seemed to have subsided. Mark & Ed say that actually there is a lot of activity in the mode and it has found its place in the Ham toolbox – especially if you are interested in the EmComm side of things. To get you started, Mark provided an article he did a couple years ago for On All Bands that talks about HotSpots.

Motions to Discuss

The Officers and Trustees have been working on a number of motions for the November meeting. You have received a special email of the proposed motions so we can discuss and vote at the November meeting. The motions are four amendments, three to the Bylaws and one to the Code of Regulations (Constitution). The amendment to the COR is to correct an inconsistency on the period of time that club documents are reviewed. The COR shows one period and the Bylaws a different period. The amendment to the Bylaws is to specify a minimum number of meetings of the club's Officers and Trustees annually. Currently the Bylaws say as needed and the amendment will specify a minimum quarterly. The third amendment is to the Bylaws to elect a candidate by acclamation. The fourth amendment is to raise The Club dues to keep our revenues in line with the rising costs.
A reminder, the November meeting is our annual business meeting.

Crystal Radio Update



The Crystal Radio working group met at Champion Middle School on October 29th for a status update and equipment test. To refresh your memory, MVARA is working with Science Teacher Rebecca Baxter to put together a crystal radio construction project for her students. The meeting was very productive. Ed KE8NSW brought two working prototypes that were tested on site along with an outside 100' antenna and an interior 30' antenna. The radio was able to receive WKBN on both antennas. As expected, the outside antenna provided greater signal. Part of the test set up for these radios included the ability to swap out the detector for different versions. Tested were a 1N34A diode detector, a Pyrite detector, and a "blued" razor blade detector. All three were able to detect the radio signal. Frank WB8YHD brought a single board AM transmitter. Rebecca's lesson plan is centered around the Foxhole radios of WWII and the alternative detectors were included to align with what were frequently used as detectors at that time.

Frank WB8YHD brought a single board AM transmitter able to be driven with audio from a phone or laptop. The thinking is to have a transmitter in the classroom in case propagation from local stations was low on any given day. The transmitter worked well and was received on the prototype radios.

Rob KE8OKO has turned out to have quite a collection of vintage crystal radios and resources from the period. In past meetings Rob brought several vintage radios and at this meeting brought multiple books from the 1920's and later. Rebecca was very interested in these books and Rob lent her several to review for tips for her class.

Mark K8MSH had a surprise for us. You probably know Mark is a prolific author that writes for a number of journals in the Amateur Radio sphere. He was in touch with the Spectrum Monitor and has written an article for them on Foxhole radios. The Spectrum Monitor Writers' Group consists of former columnists, editors and writers for Monitoring Times, Popular Communications, RadioUser and CQ magazine.

Ron KE8TNW and Dave KD8NZF assisted all during the testing. David KF8BFD is part of the group but was not able to make this meeting.

Mahoning County ARES Update

ARES Update

Our Mahoning County Simulated Emergency Test (SET) was conducted Saturday afternoon, October 3rd. We had over 25 stations participating in our area, as well as from Western Pennsylvania. This Test differed from previous years in that there was no scenario or "make believe emergency" that we were dealing with.

What we did for just over two hours of our SET was step through a predetermined set of objectives and exercises. In those two hours our ARES Operators accomplished a great deal. Our first objective was to activate our members and to see what the response was. Similar to last year's SET our DialMyCalls system was used to send text, email and phone voice messages to our ARES Members who were not notified of the SET prior to the DialMyCall messages going out. Given that our members were not previously aware of the SET, their response to the activation was excellent.

Within 15 minutes over 20 ARES Operators were checked into the ARES SET Net and ready to go to work. The first work was to activate and check EMA/ARES radios at the local hospitals as well as station operators at other key sites around the County. Those stations were dispatched and arrived at their locations within 45 minutes. Again, a very good response considering our operators didn't know what was coming at them.

The final part of the SET was to conduct simplex communications from all operator locations. This was a bit more challenging as our members were dispersed across a wide geographic area. The results were again very good. We know we can use simplex for our emergency communications in Mahoning County.

Overall, our Mahoning County ARES SET was very successful. Our results have been reported to the ARRL and our after action was gathered and will be used for more practice in all these areas coming in the future.

Another activity currently taking place in our Mahoning County ARES is a review of Member interest in ARES activities and training. Over the past few months, we have sent our ARES Members emails asking about their future interest level. Within the last week, we have also placed phone calls to those that did not respond to the emails. Soon, we will be adjusting our ARES Membership Roster to reflect the results of that analysis.

Please know that we appreciate all of our Member's efforts over the years and your continued activities into the future. Mahoning County ARES is what our Members do for our communities. Thank you all.

Also, if you haven't already, please sign up for the ARES DialMyCalls alert system. This is the way we are currently notifying Mahoning County ARES of exercises and actual activations. DialMyCalls costs you nothing and tracks no information on your phone. It provides ARES with a way to instantly send emails, voice messages and texts, all at the same time to our members for any purpose. It's free to you and another important tool we

have to assist our communities in times of need. Please sign up if you haven't already at this link:

https://www.dialmycalls.com/opt/cs1/f

Mahoning County ARES has a lot going on. It's all happening because of you, our ARES Members. Thank you all for your commitment to serving our communities in times of need.

If you're interested in joining Mahoning County ARES please visit our website https://www.mahoning-ares.org/ or email mahoning.ares@gmail.com

Your ARES Leadership Team

What You Need to Know About MMDVM Hotspots

by Mark Haverstock, K8MSH

D-STAR, DMR, YSF—amateur radio always seems to have a strange affinity for acronyms. Here's another to add to the alphabet soup: MMDVM. It's what helps you connect to other hams using one or all of the digital modes listed above.

MMDVM stands for Multi Mode Digital Voice Modem. Simply put, it's your Internet gateway to a particular digital network of hams. You can use an MMDVM hotspot if you don't have a digital repeater nearby or simply want some other options. Basically, hotspots are your own personal digital voice repeater and gateway.

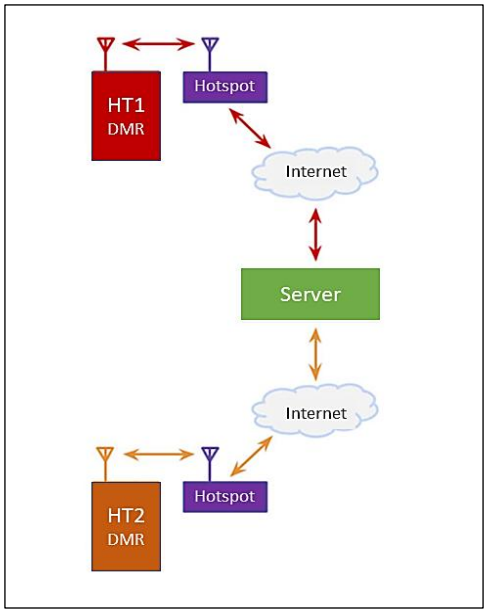
A personal, low-power hotspot combines hardware, firmware, and software that lets an amateur radio operator with an Internet connection link directly to digital voice (DV) systems worldwide. With a transmitter power of around 10mW, a hotspot acts as a personal repeater so you can connect to a variety of digital radios and digital networks using an HT or mobile radio, including:

- D-STAR: Digital Smart Technologies for Amateur Radio
- DMR: *Digital Mobile Radio*
- YSF: Yaesu System Fusion
- P25: *Project 25*
- NXDN: Next Generation Digital Narrowband

Also, some cross-mode capabilities exist, from DMR to YSF (DMR2YSF), for example. There's no need to buy multiple digital radios.

For someone who doesn't live within range of a digital voice repeater, a hotspot goes beyond being just cool technology; it becomes a critical key to accessing digital voice systems. This can open doors to worldwide contacts for those with Tech licenses or hams living in HOA neighborhoods.

How it Works



Here's a very simplified diagram of what it looks like when you connect via your hotspot:

This is like the WiFi access point you may have at home for Internet access, or a repeater that works via an Internet server. It's your own personal access point with your call sign attached, under your control, configured the way you like. Configuration is done through a free program called Pistar. Once installed and set up, Pistar can be accessed through any Internet browser on any computer.

The basic Jumbospot (which is actually tiny) has two main components: a Raspberry Pi Zero and an attached MMDVM board known in Pi-speak as a HAT—Hardware Attached on Top. This RF board sends signals from the Internet to your digital HT, as well as sending your transmitted signal back to the Internet. A miniature display shows you which mode is active if there is a station transmitting, and what their callsign is. You can also see the IP address of the hotspot. The Zumspot has a similar configuration but instead uses a more advanced Raspberry Pi 3 or 4 board and generally has a larger display. It includes an Ethernet port, which simplifies setup.

Now there's a new type of self-contained hotspot, the openSPOT. It has a tiny built-in computer and an AMBE (Advanced Multi-Band Excitation) chip that supports cross modes. For example, you can talk with your D-STAR transceiver on DMR, and with your DMR transceiver on D-STAR networks.

First, register for a Brandmeister ID. Allow 24-48 hours for processing. Once you have the ID, you'll set up an account to register your hotspot. This is a must for DMR but is also helpful for other modes.

Pick a 2-meter or 70cm simplex frequency to communicate with your hotspot—70cm is generally preferred because it's less crowded. Typically, the hotspot transmits only a short distance to your handheld transceiver, letting you walk around the house and yard while talking to hams almost anywhere in the world. You'll configure the hotspot using Pistar. There are several videos available online to guide you through the process.

Unraveling Digital Hotspots

If hotspots sound complicated, they can be. Hotspots and DV networks are still evolving, and it takes effort to keep up. Go into this with your eyes wide open and a willingness to learn the basics.

Toshen Golias, KE0FHS, has a helpful site, Amateur Radio Notes, which gives additional information on hotspots, Pistar, D-STAR, and DMR. It's worth a look if you're just getting into this facet of amateur radio.

So, which digital ecosystem do you choose? DMR? D-STAR? YSF? An obvious first step is to find out what format is most popular in your area. It's also a good idea to find an Elmer

who's already figured out hotspots and digital systems. Personally, I've found YSF easier to understand since you don't need code plugs and programming the radio is fairly simple. Jumbospots and Zumspots are the most affordable but vary considerably in the quality of instructions and support. Bridgecom's **SkyBridge Plus** hotspot is mostly plug-and-play with detailed instructions and tech support available to help get you going. It also uses a Pi 3B for quicker boot-up and provides an Ethernet connector for easier setup.
(Originally appeared in *On All Bands*, January 12, 2023
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Amateur License Refresher

It's probably been a while since you took your Amateur License exam. Here are a few sample questions from the current question pools just to keep those synapses firing.

Extra Pool

E6D01
What is piezoelectricity?
A. The ability of materials to generate electromagnetic waves of a certain frequency when voltage is applied
B. A characteristic of materials that have an index of refraction which depends on the polarization of the electromagnetic wave passing through it
C. A characteristic of materials that generate a voltage when stressed and that flex when a voltage is applied
D. The ability of materials to generate voltage when an electromagnetic wave of a certain frequency is applied

E6D02
What is the equivalent circuit of a quartz crystal?
A. Series RLC in parallel with a shunt C representing electrode and stray capacitance
B. Parallel RLC, where C is the parallel combination of resonance capacitance of the crystal and electrode and stray capacitance
C. Series RLC, where C is the parallel combination of resonance capacitance of the crystal and electrode and stray capacitance
D. Parallel RLC, where C is the series combination of resonance capacitance of the crystal and electrode and stray capacitance

E6D03
Which of the following is an aspect of the piezoelectric effect?
A. Mechanical deformation of material due to the application of a voltage
B. Mechanical deformation of material due to the application of a magnetic field
C. Generation of electrical energy in the presence of light
D. Increased conductivity in the presence of light

General Pool

G1D05
When operating a US station by remote control from outside the country, what license is required of the control operator?
A. A US operator/primary station license
B. Only an appropriate US operator/primary license and a special remote station permit from the FCC
C. Only a license from the foreign country, as long as the call sign includes identification of portable operation in the US
D. A license from the foreign country and a special remote station permit from the FCC

G1D06
Until an upgrade to General class is shown in the FCC database, when must a Technician licensee identify with “AG” after their call sign?
A. Whenever they operate using General class frequency privileges
B. Whenever they operate on any amateur frequency
C. Whenever they operate using Technician frequency privileges
D. A special identifier is not required if their General class license application has been filed with the FCC

G1D07
Volunteer Examiners are accredited by what organization?
A. The Federal Communications Commission
B. The Universal Licensing System
C. A Volunteer Examiner Coordinator
D. The Wireless Telecommunications Bureau

E6D01 (C)
E6D02 (A)
E6D03 (A)
G1D05 (A)
G1D06 (A)
G1D07 (C)

Swap & Shop

EAntennas Rotatable Delta Loop

It's perfect for smaller lots, with 5.90 ft. turning radius. Antenna is about 12.5 ft. tall and 11.7 ft. wide, very lightweight with aluminum supports and plates. 20-6m coverage (10, 11, 12m-no tuner generally needed; 20, 15, 17, 6 require a tuner.)



As with all delta loops, you'll experience a lower noise floor. It will handle up to 1kW SSB/CW/RTTY. See additional product details at DXE website.

$ 119, local pickup in Boardman. Contact Mark, K8MSH, Mhaverstock52@gmail.com.

Upcoming Contests and QSO Parties

Dave Fairbanks N8NB

Contests:
Source is contestcalendar.com

Many more activities online. These are recommended.

November 2026

+ North American SSB Sprint Contest	0000Z-0400Z, Nov 1
+ Classic Exchange, CW	1400Z, Nov 1 to 0800Z, Nov 2 and 1400Z, Mar 3 to 0800Z, Nov 4
+ Real Time Contest	1600Z-2000Z, Nov 1
+ ICWC Medium Speed Test	1300Z-1400Z, Nov 2
+ ICWC Medium Speed Test	1900Z-2000Z, Nov 2
+ QRP Fox Hunt	0200Z-0330Z, Nov 4
+ Phone Weekly Test	0230Z-0300Z, Nov 4
+ CWops Test (CWT)	1300Z-1400Z, Nov 4
+ VHF-UHF FT8 Activity Contest	1700Z-2100Z, Nov 4
+ Weekly RTTY Test	0145Z-0215Z, Nov 6
+ ARRL Sweepstakes Contest, CW	2100Z, Nov 7 to 0300Z, Nov 9

+ Worldwide Sideband Activity Contest	0100Z-0159Z, Nov 10
+ ICWC Medium Speed Test	0300Z-0400Z, Nov 17
+ ARRL Sweepstakes Contest, SSB	2100Z, Nov 21 to 0300Z, Nov 23
+ Worldwide Sideband Activity Contest	0100Z-0159Z, Nov 24
+ ARRL EME Contest	0000Z, Nov 28 to 2359Z, Nov 29
+ CQ Worldwide DX Contest, CW	0000Z, Nov 28 to 2400Z, Nov 29

DX Information

Source is www.ng3k.com,

November					
2026 Nov01	2026 Nov30	Juan Fernandez Is	XR0Z	LoTW	OPDX 20260814
2026 Nov03	2026 Nov16	Montserrat	VP2MCV NEW	LoTW	TDDX 20261019
2026 Nov04	2026 Nov11	Cape Verde Is	D44PX	LoTW	TDDX 20260912
2026 Nov09	2026 Nov20	Mozambique	C8K	LoTW	TDDX 20260409
2026 Nov10	2026 Nov24	Guinea	3X4U	M0OXO	DXW.Net 20260920
2026 Nov13	2026 Nov15	Ceuta & Melilla	EG9MM	LoTW	OPDX 20260827
2026 Nov13	2026 Nov20	Cape Verde Is	D44JB	LoTW	OPDX 20261001
2026 Nov14	2026 Nov22	South Cook Is	E51A	YT5A (B/d)	DXW.Net 20260929
2026 Nov15	2026 Nov22	Ecuador	HD4W	Club Log OQRS	OPDX 20260927
2026 Nov16	2026 Dec04	Christmas I	VK9XY	M0OXO	DXW.Net 20260720
2026 Nov20	2026 Nov27	Cocos (Keeling) I	VK9DS	?	DXW.Net 20261009
2026 Nov20	2026 Nov22	Ecuador	HD4W	Club Log OQRS	OPDX 20260927
2026 Nov20	2026 Dec03	Mauritius	3B8 NEW	LoTW	OPDX 20261022

2026 Nov22	2026 Dec02	Rodrigues I	3B9	LoTW	OPDX 20260923
2026 Nov23	2026 Nov30	Honduras	HR5	LoTW	TDDX 20260924
2026 Nov23	2026 Nov30	Sint Maartin	PJ7WW	LoTW	DXW.Net 20260902
2026 Nov23	2026 Dec01	Surinam	PZ5KW NEW	PE1K	DXW.Net 20261021
2026 Nov25	2026 Dec05	Honduras	HR9	LoTW	TDDX 20261001
2026 Nov28	2026 Dec04	Christmas I	VK9DS	?	DXW.Net 20261009
2026 Nov28	2026 Dec04	Tonga	A35TV	Club Log OQRS	TDDX 20260917
2026 Nov29	2026 Dec07	Br Virgin Is	VP2V	LoTW	DXW.Net 20261008
2026 Nov30	2026 Dec09	St Martin	FS	LoTW	DXW.Net 20260902

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Website: The MVARA is on the web at www.mvara.org. It is the place to go for club events, classes, newsletters, VE exams, swap and shop, repeaters, history, documents, and contact information.

24/7 Club Connection: The MVARA is on groups.io at https://groups.io/g/mvara. Members are invited to hang out with us there and discuss any ham related topic that interest them such as, Club Activities, Parks on the Air, Solar Cycle 25, EmComm, Special Event Stations, Contesting, Public Service, and Swap and Shop. There is video on our website at **https://mvara.org/videos.html** that shows how to use and join the 24/7 Club Connection.

The ***VOICE COIL*** is the monthly publication of the Mahoning Valley Amateur Radio Association, Inc. (MVARA) and is intended to present news, issues and opinions of interest to MVARA members and the Amateur Radio Community. We encourage contributions of articles, letters to the editor, etc. and welcome newsletter exchanges with other clubs from around the country and around the world. Permission is granted to reprint material contained herein as long as proper credit is given to this newsletter and the author. Ideas for and contributions to the VOICE COIL should be submitted to: **mvara.w8qly@gmail.com**

Submissions must be received **no later than the 24th** of the month prior to the month of issue, unless otherwise specified. **Submissions should be in MS Word format or ASCII text—no PDF, please!** Material received after the deadline will be used in the next month's VOICE COIL if it is still current and /or newsworthy.

Swap and Shop Policies
Swap and Shop listings are open to all licensed Mahoning Valley Hams--you don't need to be an MVARA member. You can include a picture for your listing. Please submit your list to mvara.w8qly@gmail.com for placement in both *Voice Coil* and website. MVARA assumes no responsibility for transactions made or inaccuracies in ads. You are responsible for checking your ad and notifying us of any corrections. Ads will run for two consecutive issues unless we are notified otherwise.

The Mahoning Valley Amateur Radio Association, Inc, meets the second Thursday of every month. Location and time are subject to change. Dues are $20.00 per year, $10.00 each for additional family members. Contact Nancy, nanceanne34@gmail.com for details.

The club call is **W8QLY**; equipment operated under this call includes a two-meter voice repeater at 146.745 (-600, 110.9 PL).

Club email: mvara.w8qly@gmail.com

MONDAY NIGHT NET operates every Monday at 9:00. PM on 146.745 MHz.
SKYWARN NET - On 146.745 MHz as weather warrants.
ARES NET- First and third Mondays of each month at 8:30 PM on 146.745 MHz; prior to the Monday Night Net.

Disclaimer
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