



Mahoning Valley Amateur Radio Association Voice Coil



October 2026	mvara.w8qly@gmail.com	The Voice Coil - Volume 26-10
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President's Corner

Hello everyone! October is here and fall seems to be in full effect! Evenings are getting colder and the days even shorter! First, I'd like to give a big thanks to those that were able to help with Silly Science Sunday this year. Those that volunteer with the exhibits, and those that are at home on the repeater as Santa for the kids, allow us to continue spreading interest for the hobby and your effort and time spent is greatly appreciated! Also, as mentioned in last month's Voice Coil, we have officer elections rapidly approaching! If you have any interest in running for a Trustee position (2 available), Treasurer, or Vice President, please be sure to attend the October Meeting on Thursday, October 8th at the GOP Headquarters in Boardman at 7PM. This will

be the last chance for any nominations to be made before the elections in November! Also, we will be voting on some the COR and By-Laws amendments that pertain to the elections this meeting, so it's very important to attend, even if by Zoom. Well that's all I have this month, see you all at the meeting!

73s

**Ralph Streb - K8TCP
President, MVARA**

Upcoming MVARA Events

Date	Event	Location
October 8, 2026	MVARA Meeting	Boardman
October 17, 2026	JOTA	Camp Stambaugh
November 4, 2026	License Testing	Boardman
November 12, 2026	MVARA Elections	Boardman

JOTA

As noted above, the Scouts will be doing a JOTA station at Camp Stambaugh on October 17th. They are looking for operators to help out. You can find more information here: <https://scoutingevent.com/433-JOTAJOTI> . Andrew Kitchens, KD8YRA, is the contact at akitchens@ajkservices.com . The event starts at 10:00am and runs into the afternoon.

CORN ROAST THANK YOU

The annual club Corn Roast was again a great success. I would like to thank all the people who helped shuck the corn, cooked the hamburgers, hotdogs, and the corn, and made all the delicious dishes and desserts!!!!

I would also like to thank all the people who attended the event, we all had a great time!!

Thanks,
Dean DeMain
W8YSU
MVARA
Corn Roast Chairman.

October Club Program

For October our speaker will be Ed Fong, WB6IQN. He obtained the BSEE and MSEE degrees from the Univ. of California at Berkeley and his Ph.D. from the Univ. of San Francisco. A Life Senior Member of the IEEE, he has 13 patents and over 50 published papers and books in the area of communications and integrated circuit design. Presently, he is employed by the University of California (previously at Berkeley and presently at Santa Cruz- Silicon Valley) as an instructor teaching graduate classes in RF design, antenna design and High Speed interface design. During his 40 year career he has worked for Motorola, National Semiconductor, and Phillips Semiconductor.



Of more interest for us is that he is recognized as an expert in the design of antennas for HF/VHF/UHF. As many of you know, he is the inventor of the DBJ-1, DBJ-2 and TBJ-1 antennas that have been featured in QST. The DBJ-1 is a highly effective dual band VHF/UHF base station antenna and the DBJ-2 is the portable roll up version. The DBJ-2 won the QST Plaque of the Month Award. Both of these antennas are featured in the ARRL VHF antenna Handbook and also in the ARRL Antenna Classic Handbook. There are over 40,000 of these antennas in use today. About half are used by hams and the other half by government and commercial agencies.

Ed will give a history on how these antennas were developed and the theory on how and why they work so well. There is no “black magic” to antennas. He will explain in a non-mathematical manner to convince you for overall performance and simplicity his approach is one of the most practical.

Motions to Discuss

The Officers and Trustees have been working on a number of motions for the October and November meetings. You will receive a special emailing of the proposed motions so we can discuss them and vote at the October meeting. A reminder, the October will be a Special Meeting as required by the COR & By-Laws for voting on motions affecting either.

Mahoning County ARES Update

ARES Update

ARRL's Simulated Emergency Test (SET) is October 3 - 4, 2026, and this nationwide exercise is the chance to test your personal



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emergency-operating skills and the readiness of your communications equipment and accessories in a simulated emergency-like deployment.

ARRL Field Organization Leaders at the section and local levels, and many other volunteers that are active in public service and emergency communications, are developing simulated emergency-like scenarios in consultation with a variety of agencies and organizations for whom radio amateurs are known to provide service during emergencies.

Please remember that station readiness and personal training and practice are tenets of the Amateur Radio Service. Any time we spend on the air will contribute to developing and practicing our personal radio communication capability.

The previous paragraphs are from the ARRL Website.

Our County's Simulated Emergency Test (SET) will be taking place sometime in October. The details haven't been worked out yet, but we can tell you that off-grid operation will be an important part of our SET this year.. So, get those batteries, generators, etc. in operational shape and be prepared for this year's test.

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

Ham Radio Tech: Protecting Antennas from Weather Damage

by Mark Haverstock, K8MSH

Here in Ohio, the weather is often unpredictable, with rapid shifts between seasons. We have a saying, "If you don't like the weather, wait five minutes." We often joke about experiencing all four seasons in one day—and occasionally twice before lunch. But we're

not alone. It seems like the weather across the United States has become more erratic—and severe.

Whether you live in Ohio, Florida, or Alaska, bad weather significantly impacts ham radio antennas by altering their resonance, increasing static noise, or causing structural damage. Rain or snow moisture can cause erratic SWR, while wind and ice can cause antenna failure.

Protecting antennas from weather damage is essential for maintaining performance, longevity, and safety. Because antennas are often installed outdoors—on rooftops, towers, or poles—they are constantly exposed to environmental stress (and whatever mood the sky happens to be in that day). A well-protected antenna system requires attention to both mechanical durability and electrical integrity.

Moisture & Oxidation

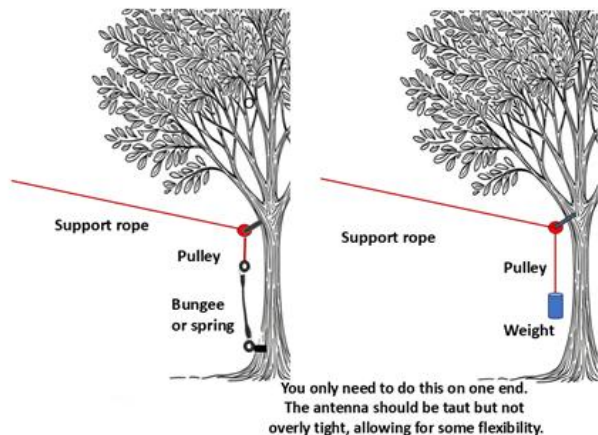
One primary concern is moisture intrusion. Water can enter coaxial connectors, baluns, and feedlines, leading to corrosion and signal loss. Over time, even small amounts of moisture can significantly increase resistance and reduce efficiency—kind of like slowly turning your antenna into a very expensive, very ineffective resistor. To prevent this, seal all external connections carefully. A common method is to wrap connectors with a layer of Temflex 2155 rubber splicing tape, then add a protective outer layer such as **Scotch 33+** UV-resistant vinyl tape. This layered approach ensures both waterproofing and resistance to sunlight degradation.

Another critical factor is corrosion resistance. Dipole antennas are typically made from conductive materials like copper or aluminum, which can oxidize when exposed to air and moisture. While aluminum naturally forms a protective oxide layer, connections between dissimilar metals (such as copper wire and aluminum components) can cause galvanic corrosion—nature’s way of reminding you that not all metals get along. Using compatible materials or applying anti-oxidation compounds like **Jet-Lube or Penetrox** at junctions can mitigate this problem. Stainless steel hardware is often preferred for antenna fasteners and mounting because it resists rust and maintains structural integrity over time. Spend time on weatherproof external connections to block moisture intrusion and apply anti-oxidation compounds to prevent corrosion.

Gone With the Wind

Wind presents a mechanical challenge, especially for longer antennas that span significant distances. Strong gusts can cause dipole antennas to sway, stretch, or even snap—sometimes with dramatic timing during a contest or net. To address this, proper tensioning is important. The antenna should be taut but not overly tight, allowing for some flexibility. Incorporating strain-relief elements, such as end insulators and support ropes made from UV-resistant synthetic materials (such as polyester), helps absorb some mechanical stress. Additionally, pulleys and counterweights help support dipole antennas between trees, preventing wire breakage caused by wind-induced tree movement. Attach a pulley—ideally stainless steel—to the tree with a sturdy hook, with a rope running over it to hold a weight, keeping the wire taut while allowing it to move. Use just enough weight to keep the antenna from sagging, but not enough to audition for a suspension bridge. A plastic container filled with water or sand, or a 1- to 5-lb. piece of concrete or metal, usually does the trick.

A range of rope hardware kits are available at DX Engineering. Kits come with a combination of pulleys, shackles, rope clips, carabiners, thimbles, and more. If a weight is impractical, consider using 2- to 3-foot marine-grade bungee cords. Rubber tarp straps are also a good choice. EPDM straps are rated to withstand sun exposure for 20 years or more. Storm door springs are another option—look for corrosion-resistant ones.



Antenna pulleys and counterweights.

Ice Cold

Ice and snow accumulation can add substantial weight to the antenna, increasing the risk of sagging or breakage. You'd think a small amount, like a quarter inch of ice, wouldn't be much, but it can add about 100 to 500 pounds to a single span of power line (depending on length). According to electric utilities, this weight can cause lines to sag or snap. A half-inch layer of glaze ice acts as a massive overload, often exceeding power line design limits and causing them to break and cut power.

You can imagine what ice would do to an 80m dipole or sky loop—and it's usually not good. Adapting antenna systems to colder climates is the best way to minimize damage. Designing the antenna with a gentle slope from the center toward the ends can help shed ice and snow more effectively, minimizing accumulation. An inverted-V with steep slopes would be an even better option. If you have the pulley system described in the preceding section, you could lower the ends until your antenna thaws—assuming you're willing to venture outside to do it.

Other adaptations include using slightly thicker wire or stranded wire rather than solid wire to improve durability. Stranded wire is more flexible and less likely to fracture under load—because sometimes flexibility really is strength. Using 12- or 14-gauge stranded wire, along with heavier Dacron rope attached to the insulator, improves structural integrity.

Heat & UV

You'd think a sunny day wouldn't threaten your antenna much. But ultraviolet (UV) radiation from the sun can degrade many antenna materials over time, especially plastics—quietly and persistently, like a slow-motion failure you didn't sign up for.

Coaxial cables and insulators are particularly vulnerable. To combat UV damage, use materials specifically rated for outdoor use. UV-resistant coaxial jackets and UV-stabilized plastic insulators can significantly extend the antenna system's lifespan. Regular inspection for cracking, fading, or brittleness is also important, as these are early signs of UV degradation.

Dark-colored or black ropes generally last longer in the sun because UV-stabilized pigments absorb or reflect harmful rays, preventing them from breaking down the fiber. Polyester and polyethylene blends offer good UV resistance and strength while being lightweight. Most modern 550 paracord (Type III nylon) is also UV-resistant, making it suitable for long-term outdoor use.

Watch for traps, baluns, and common-mode chokes with plastic housings exposed to UV. Cracked plastic end caps or failed seals allow water inside. If this water freezes, it expands and can split the plastic or seal further. If you live in an area with summer temperatures in the triple digits, painting those plastic parts with white paint can help prevent meltdowns.

Antenna Mounts

Proper mounting and placement also help protect against the weather. Positioning Yagi antennas away from trees can reduce the risk of damage from falling branches or abrasion from moving limbs during storms.

At the same time, the mounting structure itself must be robust enough to withstand environmental forces. Using guys for vertical antennas, taller masts, or towers can improve stability in high winds. Concrete bases for taller towers, built to the manufacturer's specifications, provide the stability and peace of mind you need when the wind picks up at 2 a.m.

When mounting antennas on roof tripods or securing masts to the house, anchor into roof rafters, not just decking or fascia, and waterproof at roof contact points with roofing sealant or pads. Add a guy wire kit for masts over 10 feet tall to improve stability. Use heavy-duty, rust-resistant fasteners, and keep a minimum of 20 feet from power lines—because that's one kind of contact you definitely don't want to make.

I Have a Guy

Guying helps protect against environmental loads such as ice accumulation. In colder climates, ice can form on antennas and masts, adding significant weight. This extra load increases the structure's stress and can lead to sagging or collapse if not properly supported—gravity is very consistent about this. Guy lines help bear this additional weight by sharing the load with the ground anchors, reducing the strain on the mast itself. Rope guy lines are widely used in antenna installations, especially when non-conductive, lightweight, or flexible support is needed. These are common in amateur radio and temporary setups. Rope supports the ends of dipoles or the center of inverted-V antennas, tying them to trees, masts, or ground anchors. Small to medium-sized vertical antennas and portable masts frequently use non-conductive rope guy lines to keep the antenna upright without interfering with the RF radiation pattern. Heavy-duty guy lines for towers are typically made of galvanized steel or other corrosion-resistant materials, such as Phillystran, to withstand long-term exposure to the elements. Both the rope and the heavy-duty guys must be properly tensioned—not too loose or too tight (the antenna equivalent of “just right”). Turnbuckles are often used to adjust tension on large towers precisely. The angle of the guy wires is also important; wider angles provide better lateral stability, while multiple evenly spaced wires ensure balanced support.

Shocking Experiences

Lightning and static buildup are additional hazards. Installing a proper grounding system is crucial. This includes grounding the antenna support structure and using a lightning arrestor in the feedline. The arrestor should be connected to a good earth ground, providing a path for excess voltage to dissipate safely—the shorter the path, the better. Disconnecting the antenna during severe storms is another simple but effective precaution. It's better than learning about lightning the hard way.

Storm Checklist

Here are some suggestions to protect ham radio antennas before a storm:

- Disconnect and ground all coax cables, preferably outside the home.
- Lower temporary masts, wire antennas with pulleys, and crank-down antennas. Tighten guy lines as necessary on poles and towers.
- Check feedline strain relief, drip loops, and connectors before snow/ice loading can happen.
- Power up the station to confirm everything still works before bad weather—troubleshooting in a storm is never fun.
- Have a simple, rapidly deployable antenna (e.g., an end-fed wire) prepared in a “go-kit” for immediate use after the storm, along with backup power (battery or generator).

Keep on Top of Things

Procrastinate and things will always get worse—antennas are especially good at proving this point. Routine maintenance, often overlooked, is essential for long-term reliability. Periodic inspections should include checking for loose connections, worn insulation, corrosion, and mechanical stress points. Address any signs of damage promptly to prevent further deterioration. Cleaning connectors and reapplying weatherproofing materials as needed can restore performance and extend service life.

Protecting your antenna from weather damage involves a combination of good materials, careful installation, and ongoing maintenance. Key strategies include sealing connections against moisture, preventing corrosion, ensuring mechanical stability against wind and ice, using UV-resistant components, accommodating temperature changes, and implementing proper grounding. By taking these steps, operators can keep their antennas reliable and efficient—even when the weather isn't.

--Original article appeared in *On All Bands*, April 2026.

Amateur License Refresher

The Amateur License Exams are updated on a rotating basis between the three license levels. In July the new Tech License Exam went live. It will be in use through June 30, 2030. 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

E6C01

What is the function of hysteresis in a comparator?

- A. To prevent input noise from causing unstable output signals
- B. To allow the comparator to be used with AC input signals
- C. To cause the output to continually change states
- D. To increase the sensitivity

E6C02

What happens when the level of a comparator's input signal crosses the threshold voltage?

- A. The IC input can be damaged
- B. The comparator changes its output state
- C. The reference level appears at the output
- D. The feedback loop becomes unstable

E6C03

What is tri-state logic?

- A. Logic devices with 0, 1, and high-impedance output states
- B. Logic devices that utilize ternary math
- C. Logic with three output impedances which can be selected to better match the load impedance
- D. A counter with eight states

General Pool

G1C05

What is the limit for transmitter power on the 28 MHz band for a General Class control operator?

- A. 100 watts PEP output
- B. 1000 watts PEP output
- C. 1500 watts PEP output
- D. 2000 watts PEP output

G1C06

What is the limit for transmitter power on the 1.8 MHz band?

- A. 200 watts PEP output
- B. 1000 watts PEP output
- C. 1200 watts PEP output
- D. 1500 watts PEP output

G1C07

What must be done before using a new digital protocol on the air?

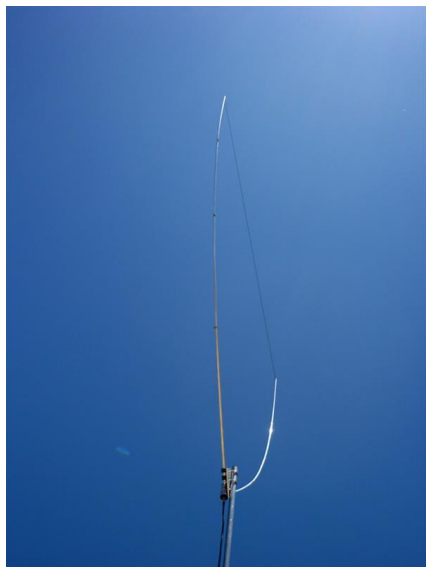
- A. Type-certify equipment to FCC standards
- B. Obtain an experimental license from the FCC
- C. Publicly document the technical characteristics of the protocol
- D. Submit a rule-making proposal to the FCC describing the codes and methods of the technique

E6C01 (A)
E6C02 (B)
E6C03 (A)
G1C05 (C)
G1C06 (D)
G1C07 (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.

October 2026

- [± California QSO Party](#)
- [± Peanut Power QRP Sprint](#)
- [± ARS Spartan Sprint](#)
- [± Makrothen RTTY Contest](#)
- [± QRP ARCI Fall QSO Party](#)

1600Z, Oct 3 to 2200Z, Oct 4
 2200Z-2359Z, Oct 4
 0000Z-0200Z, Oct 6
 0000Z, Oct 10 to 1559Z, Oct 11
 0000Z-2359Z, Oct 10

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± 10-10 Int. 10-10 Day Sprint	0001Z-2359Z, Oct 10
± SKCC Weekend Sprintathon	1200Z, Oct 10 to 2359Z, Oct 11
± Arizona QSO Party	1500Z, Oct 10 to 0500Z, Oct 11
± Pennsylvania QSO Party	1600Z, Oct 10 to 2200Z, Oct 11
± South Dakota QSO Party	1800Z, Oct 10 to 1800Z, Oct 11
± PODXS 070 Club 160m Great Pumpkin Sprint	2000Z, Oct 10 to 2000Z, Oct 11
± 4 States QRP Group Second Sunday Sprint	0000Z-0200Z, Oct 12
± New York QSO Party	1400Z, Oct 17 to 0200Z, Oct 18
± Stew Perry Topband Challenge	1500Z, Oct 17 to 1500Z, Oct 18
± Illinois QSO Party	1700Z, Oct 18 to 0100Z, Oct 19
± Run for the Bacon QRP Contest	2300Z, Oct 18 to 0100Z, Oct 19
± ARRL School Club Roundup	1300Z, Oct 19 to 2359Z, Oct 23
± AGCW Semi-Automatic Key Evening	1900Z-2030Z, Oct 21
± CQ Worldwide DX Contest, SSB	0000Z, Oct 24 to 2359Z, Oct 25
± SKCC Sprint	0000Z-0200Z, Oct 28

DX Information

Source is www.ng3k.com,

October					
2026 Oct01	2026 Oct07	Micronesia	V61GSE NEW	LoTW	DXW.Net 20260923
2026 Oct01	2026 Oct31	Juan Fernandez Is	XR0Z	LoTW	OPDX 20260814
2026 Oct01	2026 Nov04	Gambia	C5R NEW	YU5R Direct	OPDX 20260922
2026 Oct03	2026 Nov20	Solomon Is	H44MS NEW	LoTW	OPDX 20260922
2026 Oct05	2026 Oct25	Somalia	6O2M	LoTW	TDDX 20260903
2026 Oct07	2026 Oct12	Svalbard	JW5X NEW	LoTW	TDDX 20260925

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2026 Oct07	2026 Oct17	Iceland	TF	M0URX	DXW.Net 20260829
2026 Oct07	2026 Oct21	Solomon Is	H49A	LoTW	OPDX 20260530
2026 Oct08	2026 Oct30	Albania	ZA	LoTW	DXW.Net 20260827
2026 Oct10	2026 Oct12	Malta	9H6C	LoTW	OPDX 20260908
2026 Oct11	2026 Oct16	Vanuatu	YJ1JXZ NEW	LoTW	DXW.Net 20260923
2026 Oct15	2026 Nov02	eSwatini	3DA0GY NEW	LoTW	OPDX 20260925
2026 Oct16	2026 Oct20	Bangladesh	S21HRG	LoTW	OPDX 20260911
2026 Oct16	2026 Oct29	Lesotho	7P8GE	LoTW	OPDX 20260723
2026 Oct17	2026 Oct20	Bermuda	VP9	LoTW	OPDX 20260802
2026 Oct17	2026 Oct31	Sao Tome & Principe I	S9R	TBA	DXW.Net 20260501
2026 Oct17	2026 Nov02	Ogasawara	JD1BQP	LoTW	TDDX 20260803
2026 Oct19	2026 Nov19	Tanzania	5H3MB NEW	IK2GZU	OPDX 20260923
2026 Oct22	2026 Oct26	Micronesia	V63SC	LoTW	DXW.Net 20260831
2026 Oct23	2026 Oct31	Nepal	9N7XT	LoTW	OPDX 20260827

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2026 Oct26	2026 Nov25	Lesotho	7P9EA	HB9CCS	TDDX 20260715
2026 Oct28	2026 Nov06	St Kitts & Nevis	V47JA	LoTW	W5JON 20260904
2026 Oct28	2026 Nov09	Senegal	6W	LoTW	I2YSB 20260914
2026 Oct30	2026 Nov06	Antigua	V26JJ	LoTW	DXW.Net 20260717
2026 Oct30	2026 Nov12	American Samoa	KH8A	Club Log OQRS	DXW.Net 20260505
2026 Oct31	2026 Nov14	Wallis & Futuna	FW3GT 	M0OXO	DXW.Net 20260925

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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

The **VOICE COIL** is published by the MVARA. All material contained herein is considered the opinion of the author and not necessarily that of the MVARA. Announcements of events are for informational purposes and do not necessarily constitute an endorsement by the MVARA. No responsibility for accuracy is assumed by the editor or newsletter staff. Typos are included for the entertainment of those who enjoy looking for them and should be reported immediately to any nearby MVARA member :-)