



Di-Dah-Dit

Official Newsletter of the Parkersburg Radio Klub
1722 20th. St. Parkersburg, WV 26101

VHF/UHF Down On the Farm

Matt, KC8FSI, Tom, KD8NRV, Larry, KF8NW and Scott, KE8UTO participated in this year's ARRL VHF/UHF Contest in September. And they did it "down on the farm."

Matt said, "For several years, while driving home to Parkersburg from my job at the Century Aluminum Plant in Jackson County, I'd say to myself, 'I want to operate radio on *that* hill someday.'" *That hill is adjacent to Susan, K8SUZ and Larry's farm (aka Farmer in the Dale) in Belleville.*

Matt's dream was a reality during the September contest this year.



Repairs to a Cushcraft 440MHz "Boomer" antenna by (l-r) Matt, KC8FSI and Scott, KE8UTO



Larry, KF8NW, and Matt, KC8FSI, tune the 220MHz yagi for the ARRL September VHF/UHF contest

Larry says, "Matt would often bring up operating from the hill next to our farm. After a storm and a lightning strike caused damage to three vhf/uhf antennas at my place, I was required to take the antennas down."

Larry added, "In the meantime, Tom had bought a dual-band all-mode rig for 2-meters and 70-centimeters. And he expressed interest in using the new (to him) radio to work ssb on those bands but didn't have the proper antennas."

All of these circumstances caused a vision to be cast.

If the antennas could be repaired, Larry would mow the hayfield hilltop and use his crew-cab ATV to mount the antennas on and the team would accomplish their goals.



Look closely. Antennas for 6m, 2m, 1.25 and 70cm loaded onto a crew-cab ATV to use during the contest.

Tom and Larry started replacing components, straightening bent elements and making sure the antennas were solid again. Matt helped with the project after work. That all sounds good, right?

Matt would get to transmit from the hilltop. Tom would get to explore the capabilities of an all-mode Icom radio. And Larry's antennas would be back in shape.



Pop-up shelters provided shade for the operators. The ATV and fiberglass poles support the “sky-hardware.”

Well, here’s what happened.

A few days before the contest, Tom tested positive for COVID-19, so he was out and couldn’t help with tuning the four antennas that would be used nor would he be out of his self-quarantine by the start of the contest. Plus, Tom was the one providing an inverter generator and batteries for all of the power source.

The team was shorthanded now and without a power source.

“Matt and I were at BYOB (buy-your-own-breakfast) at Tudor’s Biscuit World the Saturday before the weekend of the contest.



Matt, KC8FSI, operates the SSB and FM stations on 6m, 2m, 1.25m and 70cm bands

Scott overheard some of our conversation about what all

needed to be done—and the fact that Tom wasn’t able to help. So he volunteered to help us with final touches and tuning—because of his help we were successful in getting everything ready.”

Mind you, Scott was already obligated with family matters and was not going to be able to be a part of the contest the next weekend.



Matt, KC8FSI, operates the SSB and FM stations on 6m, 2m, 1.25m and 70cm bands

“Hey, that doesn’t matter, Scott said. I just want to help you guys and maybe learn something at the same time,” *(in fact he did learn how to operate a Comet 500 Antenna Analyzer and for all intents and purposes he did participate in the contest)*

It was decided the team would use an old Coleman 5-hp generator for electricity and incorporate wired power supplies that would plug into the generator for the power source.



The scene from the CW station looking westward

The goal now was to get up on the hill, get set up, use safety precautions like taking a fire extinguisher and a ground rod for the gasoline-powered generator and even a protective “spark pad” for the generator to be placed on—after all, there was freshly-mowed hay on the top of the hill—and the weather has been more than dry.

What could go wrong with all that?

Passage to the hilltop was easy with the ATV. However, with antennas (four of them) attached to the vehicle for transport—a narrow gap that the antennas wouldn’t pass through required the use of a machete to open the gap as to not damage the antennas.

Finally on the hilltop, with all antennas mounted on poles and a mast (each pointed at a different heading), generator safely operating, not much wind, pop-ups for protection from the Sun—the elapsed time from getting ready—to being fully operational was about 2-hours. The contest started at 1800 UTC and the first transmission hit the airwaves at 1810 UTC.



MRE for lunch or dinner? Nope !! Both operators opted for a Hot-Italian Sub from James’ Country Store (delivered on top of the hill by Susan, K8SUZ.)

THE BANDS (all of them) WERE DEAD and very few people were on the air (at least in our hearing).

One true highlight of the day was when Susan cancelled her "dam" walk and instead went for sub sandwiches and for her exercise, walked up the hill to deliver them. Did I mention freshly-mowed hay?

D**n that stuff is slick.

The consensus of each team member is, "We are eager for the next outing."

Charles Wheatstone

While his name is famously attached to a circuit for measuring resistance, a device that many of us will have used in our school science labs, his work on telegraphy and his deep understanding of electricity were a crucial prequel to the age of wireless.

The Wheatstone bridge is a circuit used to accurately measure an unknown electrical resistance. Its importance cannot be overstated. In the 19th century, the ability to make precise, repeatable measurements of electrical properties was absolutely fundamental to the development of consistent and reliable.

Charles Wheatstone's work, though it predates the discovery of radio waves, is deeply

connected to the world of amateur radio. He was, in a very real sense, laying the groundwork for the hobby we enjoy today.

THE PROFESSOR AND THE TELEGRAPH

In 1834, Wheatstone's scientific reputation was such that he was appointed Professor of Experimental Philosophy at King's College London. It was a position he would hold for the rest of his life.

It was during this period that the race to create a practical electric telegraph was heating up. The idea of using electricity to send messages over long distances was in the air, and inventors across Europe and America were scrambling to be the first to perfect a workable system.



In 1837, Wheatstone formed a partnership with William Fothergill Cooke, a former army officer and entrepreneur. It was a classic pairing of inventor and businessman.

Their first great invention was the Cooke and Wheatstone five-needle telegraph. This was a

remarkable device. The receiver had five magnetic needles arranged on a diamond-shaped grid that displayed the letters of the alphabet. When a current was sent down the line, a combination of two needles would be deflected, pointing to a specific letter. The great advantage of this system, as they saw it, was that it didn't require the operator to learn a complex code like Morse code. Anyone could, in theory, read the message directly from the grid.

In 1839, they installed their system along the Great Western Railway line from Paddington to West Drayton, a distance of 13 miles. This was the world's first commercial electric telegraph, a milestone in the history of communication.

from Pioneers of Radio

PARK MINUTES

August 11, 2025 PARKERSBURG AMATEUR RADIO CLUB was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by President Larry Dale at the Western Sizzlin Restaurant on Rt 68.

Introductions were made by 29 persons in attendance.

50/50 drawing was won by Randy who donated the \$32 back to the club.

Reading of the minutes from July meeting by Susan Dale. Minutes accepted.

Treasurer's report read by Jane. Starting balance \$4313.25, paid \$141.78 for porta potty at field day. \$50 was sent to Hospice in

memory of Curt Fouse. Balance is \$4048.09 .

Motion made to accept treasurer's report and accepted.

OLD BUSINESS

Discussion held on creating some kind of public forum page for the club such as a Facebook page, a google group, Discord, etc.

Bryn shared her research that a Facebook page would need a platform administrator who would monitor and create a set of qualifying questions to those interested in becoming members. Sean said he would be willing to help Bryn with the start-up of such a platform. There will be more information, directions, and decisions presented at the September club meeting.

Reminder of Volcano Days on September 27, 2025 at Mountwood Park. Everyone is welcome to help and take part.

Jerry shared update on the switch of the N8NBL call on the repeater to W8PAR. ARRL is aware of the club call switch and Earl said Conard will be making the switch.

NEW BUSINESS

Reminder was given that help will be needed at the Volcano Days.

Congratulations extended to Curtis White for passing his test

to become an extra class operator

Larry let everyone know that the ARRL is planning a special emphasis in 2026 being the YEAR OF THE CLUB. Larry encouraged all club members to consider becoming a member of the ARRL.

(Earl brought up old business about the 97 repeater being on land that was sold. He shared that there is a possibility that the 97 machine may need to be re-located.)

Jane said that this would be a good time to get a committee together for the planning of the December Christmas Party. It will be held at Emmanuel Baptist Church in Parkersburg. Norma, Teresa, Tonya and Jane will work on this. Others are invited to help out.

Scott shared a greeting from his mom to the club, and it was announced that Jim McComas will be having a procedure on his throat on September 18.

The NUTZEE award went to Tom Porter for the new ham shack he created at the top of a hill on his property.

A T-shirt was won by Curtis White during a give away

Bob Riordan made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:20. Motion passed.

Meeting notes were recorded by Susan Dale.

Minutes September 8, 2025

Parkersburg Amateur Radio Klub meeting was called to order at 6:30 PM BY Jerry at the Western Sizzlin steakhouse on route 68. Introductions were made by 17 members and guests.

The minutes of the August meeting were read by Mary Wharton and approved as read. Financial report was given by Mary in the absence of Jane. Beginning balance of \$4098.09 Dues and raffle money equal \$103.00 and \$50 check was sent to Hospice in memory of Kurt K8UC . Ending balance equal\$4151.09

Old business

Jerry gave an update on volcano days. Things are well in hand. Scott is going to bring a station and a antenna and Connor is going to bring a station and an antenna for FTA. I've got a table and we're locating the easy ups. This is September 27, 2025 at Mountwood Park. Everybody's invited to help operate or help log.

The committee planning the Christmas dinner has been busy. I've contacted Mary B'S for catering with different choices of

meat and vegetables. If we have Mary B'S cater it, we must do all the serving and provide the dishes and silverware. If we have the same group do it that we did last year we have less selections, but they provide the serving and the tableware. Choice will have to be made in October's meeting.

New business election of officers. September is a month we normally elect officers but since three of the current officers were not in attendance, we felt we should not automatically elect them to current positions although that suggestion was made by the "nominating committee" motion was made to table the election until the next meeting so we can give the recommended officers a chance to approve or decline. The nomination proposal was to keep the same officers for one more year that was tabled until October meeting recommendation was President Larry vice president. Earl, Connor, Bill and Jerry. Jane continues as treasurer and Mary continues a secretary that decision will be made next meeting.

Having nothing further to discuss the meeting was adjourned at 7:07 by Jerry Who is officiating in Larry's absence. Minutes taken by Mary Wharton. Dictated by Jerry Wharton.

VOLCANO DAY'S

Club participates in its annual Volcano Day's celebration. After the BYOB breakfast a group of us headed out to North Bend State Park set up the Volcano Day/s special event station. The station was quickly set up using Scott's vertical and end fed antenna. I appreciate the help of Scott, Conard, Larry, Bill, Gary, me and Mike. We operated on 20 and 40 m and Conard provided to computer for the log. I think we made over 100 contacts I will check and see if I can get an exact number. We operate at 11 in the morning to about four 430 in the afternoon. The bands were heavy with parks on the air stations. Appreciate everybody that helped and if I miss mentioning somebody I'm sorry but a good time was had by everybody. I've already gotten 4 QSL certificate request. Jerry, PS Larry did you see W contacts and Gary did most of the phone I helped out a little on the phone.

Here are some pictures



Heave hoo, scott



I think it will work.



Yep it's OK.



OK here!





Tom, KD8NRV receives the N8UTZ "Nut-Zee" Award

(Photo by Teresa, KF8ADF)

Now completed, when you hear Tom on the air, the obvious question is—Tom, are you "Up" or "Down?"

Depending on his answer you'll know whether he's at the house with Teresa, KF8ADF, or perhaps she's banished him to his "Mansion of the hilltop!"



Tom Porter, KD8NRV, was awarded the N8UTZ "Nut-zee" Award at the August, 2025, Parkersburg Amateur Radio Klub monthly meeting. He was unable to attend the meeting. But it was unanimous among the previous "Nut-zee" Award winners (*which is the panel that chooses winners*) that Tom should have the award.



Please note the award sitting atop his operation position.



Just how Nut-zee is Tom about ham radio? He's often echoed the complaint of Earl, KB8HRG, "Hey, I live a a hole I don't get out that well from my house."

But, Tom has done something about it (*living in a hole*).

He began to build a rustic cabin on a hill on his farm last fall. As you can see from the photos—it's not all that rustic (especially inside).



Rustic? With a/c, propane heater and even a Keurig coffee maker and a lot of antennas.

We were a little concerned about putting "Nut-zee" out in the wilderness like this. Upon being awarded the Nut-zee Tom said, "Oh! I love to "squirrel" hunt."

The latest on Nut-zee is he's safely back in civilization with no gunshot wounds and is awaiting his next sitting position on somebody's operating position.

As a P.A.R.K. Klub member; Make sure you keep your ear to the ground and your eyes open for evidence of someone being "Nut-zee" about ham radio.

*Then, in confidence contact:
WV8PWR, KF8CWM,
KE8RBY, NQØD, KF8DJY or
KD8NRV*