



MUSCLE SHOALS AMATEUR RADIO CLUB

The Monthly Repeater

August 2026

Welcome to the Muscle Shoals Amateur Radio Club's (MSARC) newsletter, "The Monthly Repeater."

What you can expect this month in The Monthly Repeater:

- Happenings in Hueytown;
- 2026 Field Day Perspective;
 - Roy's Rants;
- The Stomp Switch Chronicles;
 - Gary's Corner;

So, sit back and enjoy!

HUEYTOWN
Huey Stanfield/KN4DDG

Good morning my fellow MSARC members, starting this morning, I will be highlighting Winter Field Day which will take place the weekend of January 23rd and 24th. This year Roy Nagle and I have been appointed to plan, assemble, facilitate operations of the WFD site. compile an after-action report for presentation to the club executive committee and the club members. We are currently reviewing the after-action report from the Summer Field Day as was executed by Matthew and Steve in their usual professional manner. Great work!

Currently the WFD27 rules have not been formalized, that is scheduled for the end of September 2026. So therefore I/we are going with last year's WFD26. We are leaning toward a single mobile emergency trailer which we will locate on the outer edge of Veterans Park, Florence AL. At this location we have ample parking, nearby restrooms and several restaurants.

We are projecting to operate a single transceiver (Icom 7300), a Heil Pro7 headset with HC-IC element, and a foot switch; this setup will be tested prior to WFD to avoid a repeat of WFD26 error. At this time, we have not decided on the type of antenna.

Now for the tricky part: We will need several willing people to setup the station, also several operators to man the station spread out over the entire operations from 1600 UTC Saturday January 23rd thru 21.59 UTC Sunday January 24th. Additionally, we will require several people disassemble the station.

If you have any ideas or suggestions please contact Roy, Gary or myself. 73.

2026 Field Day Retrospective

By Chris Arthur, NV4B

The paperwork has been done thanks to Matthew Sherrill, AA4BM, and the final tally for us this year is 12,160 points! The club met the challenge I proposed last year of scoring at least 10,000 points and set a new all-time record for the MSARC.

We were aided by storm-free weather and excellent band conditions. Field Day scores should be up across the board; Huntsville, for instance, also set an all-time club record this year. Looking at the past 25 years of Class 3A scores, our score this year would have placed us in the top 5 every year except for one. This year could also be an exception; now we wait until mid-November for the final scores to see where we ended up.

We did have some technical problems and interstation interference. 20/15m CW in particular caused issues with the phone station. 80/20/15m CW was unable to use bandpass filters because of SWR issues; although the antennas were usable with a tuner, the SWR on the feedline exceeded the specifications of the filters. Steve Beyke, KK4MIJ and I had a very productive conversation regarding antennas a couple of weeks after Field Day, and with better communication regarding antenna requirements next year, most if not all of these problems will be solved. In-band interference may still be an issue; we need to ensure the SSB radio is set up properly to minimize issues. Changing the site layout could also help solve issues so that the CW tribander is not aimed directly at the phone station.

Discussions are already underway among the 2027 Field Day committee regarding plans for next year's operation. This year's act will be hard to follow, but there are some in the club who want to try. What we need more than anything else is participation, especially from phone operators. I was told around this time last year that we had a number of people interested in learning about phone contesting, and at the request of former president David Faulkner, W4YVU, I spent quite a few hours preparing and presenting several Tech Talks on Field Day operating. Although we did have a few attend each session and subsequently operate at Field Day, we need more people to step up and participate. It has been proposed that we move up to 4A by adding a second phone station, but we must have more operators. Perhaps it would help to have one phone station that is more competitive and one that is more casual to give people an option of operating styles.

There has also been some discussion of adding digital. A dedicated digital station is likely to cause serious interference to CW and clash with GOTA digital ops, but it is likely one of the CW stations will be idle overnight and could be put on digital while it's not being used for CW. Laura, K4CNY and I tried it this year, and it worked well, with the exception of one instance where GOTA was on 40m FT4 at the same time we were, but this can be worked around.

If you have thoughts on Field Day 2027, please let committee co-chairs Roy Nagle, KI4UX and/or Huey Stanfield, KN4DDG know.

ROY'S RANTS

Artificial Intelligence: A New Tool in the Amateur Radio Toolbox

By Roy Allen Nagle, KI4UX

If someone had told me just a few years ago that I would be discussing antenna designs with a computer, I probably would have smiled, reached for a roll of wire, and gone back to tuning an antenna. Today, Artificial Intelligence has earned a place in my amateur radio toolbox.

I don't view AI as a replacement for experience or on-the-air testing. I use it as a design and analytical tool—a way to compare ideas, examine tradeoffs, and explore possibilities before cutting wire or climbing a tower. Whether evaluating end-fed half-wave antennas, doublets, G5RVs, shunt-fed towers, gamma matches, counterpoise systems, or portable Field Day antennas, AI helps organize technical information and encourages me to ask, 'What if?' Those conversations often lead to better questions, better planning, and occasionally better antennas.

Like any tool, AI is not perfect. It can make mistakes, so every recommendation should be verified with sound engineering practices, trusted references, and practical operating experience. Used wisely, however, it has become another valuable instrument in the shack—right alongside the SWR meter, soldering iron, and notebook.

73,
Roy Allen Nagle, KI4UX

The Stomp Switch Chronicles

Roy Allen Nagle, KI4UX

QRZ fellow amateur radio operators, club members, and radio neighbors, for your reading pleasure I offer this article dedicated to Field Day, contests, and other amateur radio events within the Muscle Shoals Amateur Radio Club. Let me briefly explain the title. Our operating position has traditionally used a foot-operated PTT switch that I affectionately call the “Stomp-to-Talk Switch,” and it has become part of our Field Day identity.

This month I want to focus on MSARC Field Day 2027. The planning process is already underway. Field Day 2026 will be a difficult act to follow with its outstanding score and favorable weather, but I believe we can build on that success. One of our first priorities will be developing a comprehensive pre-Field Day punch list to ensure every detail is completed before kickoff.

As of this writing, we are exploring the possibility of operating as a 4A station. We have operators who thrive on running frequencies and maintaining fast-paced CQ operations, while others enjoy the more relaxed search-and-pounce style. Those different operating preferences may make a fourth station a worthwhile addition. The 4A decision remains a work in progress. We also plan to continue our successful CW operation, our primary SSB station, and our GOTA station.

I would also like to encourage everyone to begin using the MSARC Google Group more actively. It will become our central location for sharing important announcements, volunteer sign-up sheets, schedules, and planning information as Field Day approaches.

Huey KN4DDG and I have been asked to serve as your 2027 Field Day co-chairs. We welcome your ideas, suggestions, and, most importantly, your participation. Whether you can operate for an hour or a portion of a hour, every volunteer contributes to our success.

In closing, Field Day 2027 planning has officially begun. Together, we can make next year's event even better than the last. I look forward to working with each of you as we prepare for another outstanding Field Day.

73,
Roy
KI4UX

Gary's Corner

Gary / AI4QC

First, let me start by apologizing for the lateness of this edition of the newsletter. I can only blame myself since I was left without adult supervision for two weeks. I will work to do better moving forward. If anyone wants to take the job of newsletter editor, let me know! Also, if anyone would like to add an article, either a one-time article or an on-going series, PLEASE SEND IT TO ME!!!

Field Day 2026 is in the books. Last month, we had the preliminary results, which were pretty close to the final numbers. Thanks for Chris and Matthew for processing and submitting our score. That alone is a huge task! Knowing all the rules, keeping track of bonuses, checking for duplicates in contacts, and doing the final submissions. Keeping track of the score is one of those tasks that many often don't realize or forget.

I also want to thank everyone who did the "behind the scenes" jobs. This includes fueling generators, set-up of antennas, FOOD, and those who stuck around to take everything down. They are the unsung heroes!

So, now we rest for a bit, right? NO! We did great this year, but planning for next year's Field Day starts NOW! Chris, Huey, Roy, and myself have already started talking about goals for next year. We have talked among ourselves and with others about what went right, and what can we do better. I'll no go into details, but I know that the team is working hard.

One idea is to start with the club participating in other on-air activities. Whether it be other contests, or even special events, we need to keep fresh in a contest mode. Practice working pile-ups, listening to weak stations, calling CG, and doing search/pounce. Also, getting people practice on CW and getting familiar with various digital modes (i.e. FT4/FT8).

Stay tuned! I know that our Field Day team has great plans for 2027!

Upcoming Events:

MSARC Monthly Business Meeting 9am, September 5 th , 2026 Underwood/Petersville Community Center 840 County Rd 7 Florence, AL 35633	MSARC 1st Thursday On-Air Tech Talk About 6:15pm, August 6 th , 2026 Immediately Following our nightly Training Net Same frequencies as our Nightly AENJ Training Net
MSARC 3rd Thursday Tech Talk 7pm, August 20 th , 2026 Colbert County EMA 91 Harcourt Morgan Way Muscle Shoals, AL 35611	Work Day August 8 th , 2026 Contact Matthew Sherril/AA4BM for details