June 2026 Feedline

With summer finally here, the static is clearing, the days are longer, and our radios are warming up.

Whether you are tuning in from your home shack or packing up a portable rig for some outdoor operating, there is plenty to get involved with.

This issue will be focused on ‘summer fun’ within our great hobby and some tips to make your operations optimal !

Field Day Countdown: We are officially in the home stretch! Check the website for full logistical details, site maps, and setup times for our upcoming Field Day operations. We need all hands on deck to make this year a success.

Tech Spotlight: A deep dive into optimizing your portable antenna setups for summer operations, including tips for minimizing footprint while maximizing your signal.

As always, a huge thank you to everyone who contributed articles, photos, and signal reports for this issue. This newsletter thrives on your participation.
Grab a cold drink, fire up the rig, and enjoy the read. See you on the air!

Tony VE3ZAV

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

It's time for our annual general meeting now that the warm weather is here. This is the time when we choose who will stand for the next year to guide our club into the future. I invite you to stand for nomination to the board of directors or one of the other positions in our management structure.

Standing for nomination, if successful, gives you a front row seat in helping to manage the affairs of the club with other like minded individuals and in that process, grow to know the club and it's members more fully and deeply.

We look forward to working with you in the next club year to drive the club to even greater successes and growth as the premier non-profit, incorporated, amateur radio club in the Niagara Peninsula.

Now, it is time to get out and play radio again while the warm weather is here. Our Summer Field Day is rapidly approaching at the end of the month (June 27-28, 2026) and plans are being prepared for a great 24 hours of radio with one overnight camping free of charge for you as the club will cover the cost of those camping fees for summer field day participants.

We will conduct our field day at Ball's Falls Conservation Area near Jordan, Ontario. This site provides a beautiful outdoor setting that includes nature trails, historic buildings, waterfalls, and more.

We will be supplying food and refreshment while we contest. So, come on out to our Summer Field Day and show your family and friends what Amateur Radio can be all about.

We will circulate sign up sheets to everyone at the meeting on Thursday for all those interested in participating with our annual Summer Field Day.

Whether you are enjoying POTA in a never activated spot and making great contacts or just kicking back on the patio deck in the late afternoon sun playing radio with a favourite beverage, I wish you the best that summer can bring. Let us know on Groups.io how you are doing with the radio.

73s, Paul VE3WRP

ARRL Field Day 2026 is scheduled for **June 27–28, 2026**, operating from 1800 UTC Saturday to 2059 UTC Sunday. It is amateur radio's premier emergency preparedness exercise and operating event, with 2026 featuring a special focus on the America250 celebration. Participants set up stations in field locations to test autonomous, portable capabilities. ARRL +2

Key Details for Field Day 2026

- **Dates:** June 27–28, 2026.
- **Theme:** "Amateur Radio: A National Resource," celebrating America's 250th anniversary.
- **Location:** Find local stations or clubs using the ARRL Field Day Station Locator.
- **Rules & Participation:** Primarily, this is a communication exercise, not a contest, though it is often operated like one. Participants can check official rules at ARRL Field Day.
- **Bonus Points:** Use the hashtag #ARRLFD on social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, or YouTube) for 100 bonus points.
- **Merchandise:** Official 2026 gear with a patriotic theme is available through the ARRL Shop. ARRL +4

How to Participate

- **Join a Group:** Find a local amateur radio club, such as the Five Flags Amateur Radio Association or the Cascade Amateur Radio Enthusiasts, that is organizing an event.
- **Operate Alone or Small Group:** Use the "1B" or "1D" categories to operate from home or a temporary, portable location.
- **GOTA Station:** Encourage newcomers or inactive hams to use the "Get On The Air" (GOTA) station.
- **Report Results:** Submit your results via the web app or mail within 30 days of the event. ARRL +5

The **2026 Dayton Hamvention**, the world's largest amateur radio gathering, took place from **May 15 to 17, 2026**, at the Greene County Fairgrounds and Expo Center in Xenia, Ohio.

Organized by the Dayton Amateur Radio Association (DARA), the massive event drew over 30,000 global attendees, operators, and hobbyists.

Key Highlights

The Theme: The official theme for 2026 was **"Radio Adventure,"** which celebrated the spirit of outdoor exploration, citizen space science, and experimental radio technologies.

Massive Exhibition & Flea Market: Hundreds of indoor commercial vendors (including major industry names like Icom, Yaesu, Kenwood, and Elecraft) showcased cutting-edge transceivers, amplifiers, and antennas. Meanwhile, thousands of outdoor flea market spaces offered everything from vintage parts to unique, niche components.

Diverse Educational Forums: The weekend featured dozens of technical presentations and forums. High-profile topics included the *HamSCI Space Weather Station project*, the historic *3Y0K Bouvet Island DXpedition*, 3D printing for radio applications, and advanced Parks on the Air (POTA) operating techniques.

Focus on the Next Generation: DARA and the ARRL heavily emphasized youth participation. Saturday featured a dedicated **Youth Rally** and Youth Forum showcasing student projects (such as an Earth-Moon-Earth satellite station built by a Webelos Scout), alongside an active Collegiate Amateur Radio Meetup.

The event also featured popular pre-convention gatherings like Contest University and the QRP Amateur Radio Club International's "Four Days in May" (FDIM), solidifying Hamvention's status as the ultimate annual hub for innovation and community within the amateur radio world.

POTA – PARKS ON THE AIR !!!

In the Niagara Area there are untold wonders, rustic waterfalls, hidden fishing holes, walks through ancient forests, quiet solitude under shady trees with a gentle breeze and the sound of water lapping against a shore line, and finally discoveries of historic sites and the history of this area we call home,

All these and more I have discovered while enjoying my Amateur Radio Hobby participating in an activity called Parks On The Air.

It starts with a web page called pota.app (click on link below), here you will find among many things a map , for Entity select Canada, for location select Ontario, a large format map will appear, shrink it to find lake Erie and Ontario, then enlarge it to find Niagara, the map will explode with yellow dots, each dot is a hidden wonder to explore. The cursor becomes a hand, place it over a dot and click, the name of the park appears and an identifier number ie. CA-5594, click the tab marked as More Info and you will find location information, addresses, websites, and lists of people who have visited the site.

The journey begins.
If you draw a line from Grimbsy to Dunneville, from that line to the Niagara River there are over 50 parks to explore, each park has it's own character, a battle field, a nature preserve, history of the area each available and easily accessible, most are free to explore, while a few require admission.

On Thursday June 4th I took my pota pup Addy and went to a beautiful park by the shores of Lake Erie for the day, we walked the trails of the park, splashed in the waters of Lake Erie and rested in the shade of a giant Maple tree with a cool breeze and the sound of water lapping the stony beech nearby.

I set up a portable radio and antenna and enjoyed a day making contacts on 20 meters while I partner laid by my side. The park we chose was Morgans Point Conservation Area, a Carolinian forest. The park has large shade trees, a large parking lot, a children's play ground and rustic washrooms, walking trails and a number of access point to the lake, it's POTA designation is CA-5594.

https://pota.app/#/

73 from Kevin Lemon VE3RRH

Summer is prime time for amateur radio. Between Parks on the Air (POTA), Summits on the Air (SOTA), Field Day, and casual camping trips, the urge to get outdoors and make contacts is irresistible.

However, summer operating brings unique challenges. Crowded campgrounds, strict park regulations, and heavy foot traffic mean you often cannot string hundreds of feet of wire or erect giant tripods. To stay on the air without drawing unwanted attention or creating trip hazards, you need an antenna setup that balances a **minimal physical footprint** with **maximum signal efficiency**.

1. Top Antenna Designs for Low-Footprint Operations

When choosing a summer portable antenna, the goal is high radiation efficiency with minimal ground real estate. Three designs excel in this environment:

A. The Ground-Spike Quarter-Wave Vertical

A quarter-wave telescoping vertical (such as a 17-foot or 25-foot stainless steel whip) paired with a simple ground spike is a powerhouse for summer operations.

- **Why it works:** It requires zero trees, has a tiny physical profile, and offers a low take-off angle excellent for DX (long-distance) propagation.
- **Footprint Tip:** Instead of fanning out a dozen 33-foot radial wires that children and dogs will trip over, use **Faraday cloth** or a highly compact pre-made radial puck. A 4×4 foot sheet of Faraday cloth laid directly under the spike and electrically connected to the coax shield provides excellent capacitive ground coupling while taking up virtually no space.

B. The End-Fed Half-Wave (EFHW) in an "Inverted-L" or "Sloper"

If you prefer wire, an EFHW resonant on 40m–10m is the ultimate deployment tool.

- **Why it works:** Because it is fed at a high-impedance point, it requires only a minimal counterpoise (often just a few feet of wire or the shield of your coax) rather than a massive radial field.
- **Footprint Tip:** Instead of stringing it out horizontally across a massive clearing, launch one end into a single tree or up a lightweight fiberglass mast, running the wire down as an Inverted-L or a steep Sloper. The actual footprint on the ground is reduced to the single point where your radio sits.

C. The Magnetic Loop (MagLoop)

For absolute minimalism, the magnetic loop antenna is unmatched.

- **Why it works:** A typical MagLoop is less than 3 feet in diameter and sits on a small camera tripod right next to your operating position.
- **Footprint Tip:** It is highly directional and inherently rejects nearby artificial noise. While it has a narrow bandwidth (requiring re-tuning when you change frequencies), its footprint is exactly as wide as your tripod legs. It's perfect for picnic tables or crowded beach blankets.

2. Engineering the Setup for Maximum Signal

Minimizing your footprint doesn't mean you have to accept a weak signal. Use these strategic adjustments to maximize your RF output:

Optimize Your Feedline (Don't Lose Watts to the Dirt)

When operating portable, lightweight coax like RG-174 is tempting because it packs down small. However, at higher HF frequencies (like 10 and 15 meters, which boom during summer daytimes), thin coax can introduce significant signal loss.

- Upgrade to **RG-8X** or **LMR-240 UltraFlex**. They offer a fantastic middle ground: highly flexible, rugged, and significantly lower loss, ensuring your precious QRP or 100W power actually reaches the antenna.
- Keep your coax run as short as practically possible.

Use a Common Mode Choke

Portable antennas—especially end-feds and verticals with minimal radials—are notorious for RF traveling back down the outside of the coax shield. This causes "hot lips" on your microphone, distorts your audio, and raises your local noise floor.

- Place a small, lightweight **1:1 common mode choke (ferrite isolator)** right at the antenna feedpoint or a few feet away from the rig. This forces the RF to stay on the antenna, improving both your transmitted signal and your receiver's clarity.

Elevate the Feedpoint Strategically

If you are using a vertical antenna, getting the feedpoint just 1 to 2 feet off the ground and using tuned, elevated radials can drastically reduce ground losses compared to laying radials over dry, high-resistance summer grass.

3. The "Stealth" Protocol: Staying Low-Profile

Operating in public spaces during the summer requires good stewardship of the hobby. A massive setup can cause park rangers or camp hosts to ask you to pack up due to safety liabilities.

```
     [ Low-Profile Setup Checklist ]
|
+-- Wire Selection: Use 20-22 AWG stealth wire (dark green or black)
|
+-- Tree Protection: Use wide arbor straps; never wrap bare wire around bark
|
+-- Visibility: Mark guy lines with bright surveyor's tape ONLY near the ground
```

- **Go "Incognito" with Wire:** Ditch the bright copper or yellow insulated wires. Use 20- or 22-AWG stranded wire with dark green or black jacket insulation. It virtually disappears against trees and summer foliage.
- **Ditch the Banners:** While flying a massive club flag or POTA banner is fun, it attracts crowds and official scrutiny. Keeping your station compact and tidy makes you look like a casual park-goer rather than an unauthorized event organizer.
- **The "Steering Wheel" Safety Rule:** If you anchor any part of your antenna or guy lines to your vehicle, **loop your coax through the steering wheel**. If you need to abruptly leave or reposition the vehicle, you won't accidentally drag your expensive transceiver through the dirt.

Practical Antennas

Summary Table: Portable Antenna Comparison

Antenna Type	Ground Footprint	Visual Stealth	DX Performance	Ease of Setup
Quarter-Wave Vertical	Ultra-Small (with Spike)	Moderate (High Whip)	Excellent	Fast
End-Fed Half-Wave	Small (Inverted-L)	Excellent (Thin Wire)	Good to Very Good	Medium
Magnetic Loop	Micro (Tripod Only)	Low (Obvious Ring)	Good	Fast (But High Tuning)

Breaking the Arctic Silence: How a 15-Year-Old Ham Made History in June 1925

For early polar explorers, isolation wasn't just a logistical challenge—it was absolute. When legendary explorer Donald B. MacMillan returned from a four-year Arctic expedition in 1917, he stepped off his ship completely unaware that World War I had broken out, raged, and fundamentally changed the globe.

MacMillan vowed never to be that isolated again. But early attempts to bring standard, long-wave radios into the extreme north failed; the massive antennas and low-frequency waves were swallowed up by atmospheric interference and the harsh polar environment.

Everything changed in **June 1925**, during the launch of the **MacMillan Arctic Expedition**. This historic voyage permanently revolutionized global communication, proving to the U.S. Navy and the world that shortwave radio was the future. What makes the story incredible is that the expedition's lifeline back to civilization relied entirely on a 15-year-old amateur radio operator broadcasting from his parents' attic in Iowa.

The Launch: June 17, 1925

On **June 17, 1925**, MacMillan's ships—the *Bowdoin* and the *Peary*—steamed out of Boston, heavily backed by the U.S. Navy and carrying a secret weapon.

Eugene F. McDonald Jr., the founder of the Zenith Radio Corporation and a lieutenant commander in the Navy, had signed on as second-in-command. McDonald was convinced that the newly discovered "shortwave" frequencies (what hams now know as the High Frequency, or HF, bands around 7 MHz and 14 MHz) could do what massive commercial equipment could not: bounce off the ionosphere and travel across the globe.

To prove it, they recruited legendary amateur radio pioneer **John Reinartz** (station 1XAM) to operate the shortwave rig on board the *Peary*.

The Weak Link in the Navy's Chain

As the expedition sailed further north into the subarctic waters of Greenland that June, the U.S. Navy's state-of-the-art, long-wave communication systems quickly went deaf. The heavy atmospheric noise and daylight conditions of the Arctic summer rendered the official military channels useless.

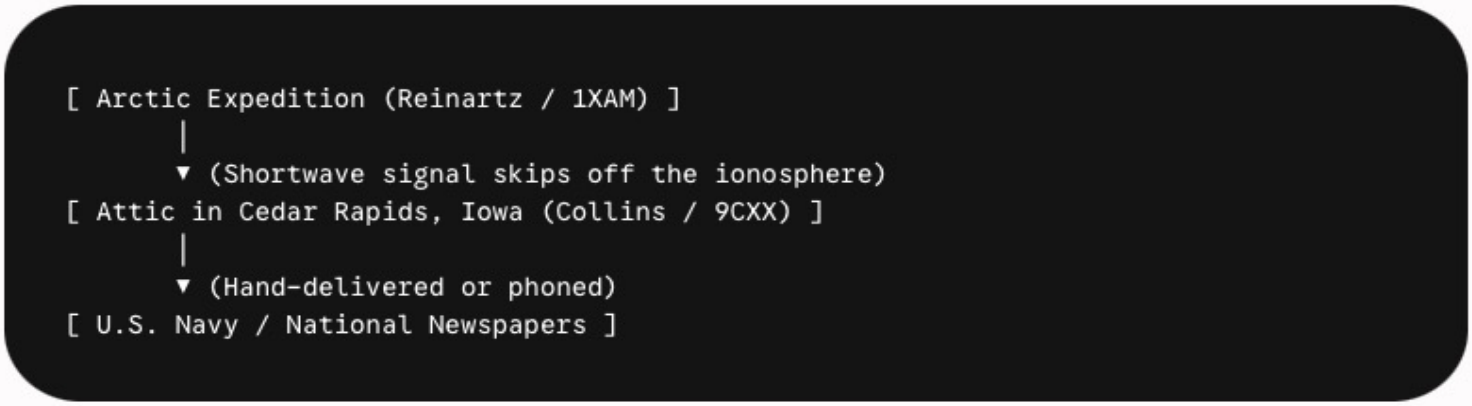
The expedition was officially cut off from the U.S. government—or it would have been, if not for Reinartz and his experimental shortwave gear.

Reinartz began hammering out Morse code into the northern night, hoping an amateur somewhere on Earth would catch the skipping signal. The Navy's multi-million dollar listening stations heard nothing. But a high school kid in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, did.

Enter Arthur Collins (9CXX)

Arthur Collins was just 15 years old, but he was already an extraordinarily talented ham radio operator, running station 9CXX from his family's attic. He had meticulously designed and wound his own coils to handle the finicky, experimental shortwave bands.

While the rest of the world lost contact with the expedition, young Arthur copied Reinartz's signals perfectly.



Night after night throughout the summer, Arthur sat in his sweltering attic, carefully logging updates, scientific data, and personal messages from the ice-locked ships. He typed them up and hand-delivered them to the local telegraph office to be forwarded to Washington, D.C., and national newspapers.

Why It Changed History

The success of the June 1925 expedition sent shockwaves through the communication industry.

- **The Death of Long-Wave Monopolies:** Governments and commercial giants realized that massive, expensive long-wave shore stations were obsolete for long-range communication. Shortwave radio required a fraction of the power and much smaller antennas.
- **The Birth of a Giant:** Arthur Collins's overnight national fame as the kid who kept the Arctic expedition alive launched his career. In 1933, he founded the **Collins Radio Company**. His gear would go on to power the U.S. military in World War II, the aviation industry, and eventually, the Apollo moon missions.

Every June, modern amateur radio operators celebrate this spirit of emergency preparedness, rapid deployment, and technical innovation during **ARRL Field Day**—the largest on-air event in North America. When tens of thousands of hams head into fields and parks with portable gear on the fourth weekend of June, they are tracing their fingers right back to the cold, isolated June of 1925, when a handful of hobbyists proved that radio could conquer the edge of the Earth.

In Summary …. I hope you have enjoyed this edition of Feedline and remember; this is a newsletter that needs YOUR material to make it a success !

I wish you all a SAFE and enjoyable SPRING season and chat soon !

73's VE3ZAV Tony

NEXT CLUB MEETING : Thursday June 11, 2026
Black Creek Community Centre

NPARC Repeaters

VE3NRS
147.240+ 107.2 tone

Yaesu System Fusion Auto / Auto analog / digital – no wires-x

VE3WCD
147.300+ 107.2 tone
Yaesu System Fusion Auto / FM analog

VE3RNR
443.175+ 107.2 tone
Yaesu System Fusion Auto / Auto analog / digital – wires-x

Repeaters Update from Repeater Chair John va3wm

Just a brief repeaters update. All 3 NPARC repeaters are operational.

VE3NRS (FM and C4FM digital), VE3WCD (FM) and VE3RNR (FM and C4FM digital with wires-x) operate with reliable 100% availability.

Any questions or concern may be sent to John va3wm at repeaterchair@nparc.ca. Info may be found at https://nparc.ca/repeater-list/.

Club Nets

Monday, 8 pm, VE3RAF, 145.190+, 107.2 Hz: Community Communication Service Net
- A controlled net dedicated to community service work.

Wednesday, 8 pm, VE3NRS, 145.240+, 107.2 Hz: Social Net
- An informal net for general discussion of ham radio and other things.

All amateurs are very welcome at both nets.