

SANDUSKY VALLEY

Amateur Radio Club Notes and News

Notes from the
President:

2 Meter Repeater

New "QRN Column"
Contributed by Joe
Hoffman, W8JH

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Chasing Special
Events
What IF Cell Towers
Died!



Notes from the President

Fellow Hams and Friends,

February is here, it can be a turning point in the weather. After the last couple weeks, any moderation in temperatures and precipitation would be great. Outside Ham Radio work is close to non-existent, except for the hardest of bodies.

For some of us, we need to get on the air more so when events like Field Day come around we can play a bigger part in the success. Hope everyone has a good second half of winter. Talk to you on the nets and see you next Saturday.

73's Jay, K8VCE Talk to everyone on Monday evening, 145.250 7PM No PL Required

Repeater Operations

The repeater seems to be working just fine and the Monday evening net is getting more attendees! Jump on that 2meter rig at 7:00 PM on Mondays, frequency is 145.250 with No PL tone required. Be Radio Active as the ARRL has stated all this year.

Should any one have any trouble accessing the repeater, please just drop me a note at rondyke2000@yahoo.com or text me at 423-231-6315 and I will be glad to see what can be done to make things better.

The “QRN” Column

Contributed by Joe Hoffman, W9JH

Ham Radio- It's a big tent

Welcome to the inaugural *Random QRN* column. I expect to continue writing this monthly column as long as it is well received. Hopefully I can provide worthwhile information with a bit of humor sprinkled in that will keep the readers interested. If you're wondering about the title of the column, know that I plan to cover the “Q” codes and other Amateur Radio abbreviations in a future column.

The topic for this month is **Ham Radio- It's a big tent**. I've always been drawn to the hobby, in part, due to the vast expanse of different sectors of the Amateur Radio. We will cover more of these aspects in a future column as well. In addition, it's fascinating to me that I have met hams from under 10 years of age to well over 90 years of age. It's very rare to find a hobby with such breadth and depth. Also enticing is the very low barrier to entry. Regarding earning your license, please note that back in 1991 KC6TQR was able to do so at age 5, and by age 6 she was talking about it on the David Letterman show! That interview can be seen here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8XGb1d8sjco>

So, the barrier to entry as it pertains to licensing is quite manageable. Regarding equipment, know that like most hobbies you can spend an

unreasonable amount of money on the latest and greatest equipment, or you can pick up quite serviceable second hand equipment at very reasonable cost. The choice is up to you. In many cases SVARC members are willing to help you through the equipment selection process by demonstrating or loaning some starter radio equipment.

Speaking of SVARC, I am a relatively new member with well under a decade of membership in this club. I do have decades of experience with different clubs, in different parts of the country, however. When I first joined, I was happy to find that SVARC has many knowledgeable people, exemplary for a fairly small club. Furthermore, virtually all are willing to help folks with questions on most any subject on the net or at the meetings. Please take advantage of this incredible resource. You do not need a license to listen on the net. However, the experience will be better once you do have a license. Please attend one of the monthly meetings, open to all, to learn about how to get licensed to more fully enjoy this rich hobby.

In summary, Ham Radio is a fantastic hobby, with low barriers to entry. After more than 50 years of being a Ham, I find myself still exploring new areas that I have never tried before. Please consider taking a look for yourself and earning your license if you do not have one. If you are licensed, make sure you are Radio Active! Participate in the net, attend a meeting, explore some of the far corners of the Ham Radio big tent.

73,

Joe, W8JH

The following article is reprinted with the Authors permission, taken from the Dec, 2025 issue of Forbes Magazine.

Jim Clash Article II

Joe Walsh on Alcohol, Ham Radio and the Eagles.James Gang Connection

Rock & Roll Hall of Fame Joe Walsh has led a full life. Here Walsh opens up about his former days of abusing alcohol, differences playing in the Eagles and James Gang and his passion for ham radio.

In Part 1 of our interview series with Eagles and James Gang guitarist Joe Walsh, we discussed his upcoming charity event courtesy of Julien's Auctions on December 16-17. Walsh is putting on the block at Hollywood's Troubadour club 800 rock memorabilia items he has collected over the decades, part of the proceeds going to his VetsAid not-for-profit. We also dissected his solo hit "Life's Been Good," and whether that Maserati really goes 185.

Here, in Part 2, Walsh opens up about his former alcohol abuse, his passion for ham radio and the differences between playing solo, and in The James Gang and The Eagles. Following are edited excerpts from a longer Zoom conversation.

Jim Clash: What are the differences between playing in The James Gang, The Eagles and solo?

Joe Walsh: The James Gang was a three-piece, bass, drums and guitar. For a good rock group, that's really all you need. You might want a lead singer unless the guitar player sings. There's a symmetry and way of playing music where it's very powerful, in your face, and you can hear everything. We were young with the attitude, "Well, somebody count off and, when everything is broken, we're done [laughs]. We were naive and young, and The James Gang was an extension of that.

Afterwards, I had a solo career I did well with for a couple of years. All of a sudden, I was the boss, in charge, not really in the band. I had support musicians I told what to do. I was in charge of hiring and firing, and all of the decisions that came with that. I didn't want to do it anymore. I wanted to be back in a band, a part of something.

As it happened, life's been good, The Eagles had to replace a guitarist, and I stepped in. I couldn't be more blessed because it was a great group with great singers that I could play guitar for, and sing some harmonies. I was part of a band of brothers, if you will. My writing really blossomed with the input of the

other guys, watching them, going "Holy smokes, look how this works." It was amazing. So those are the differences.

Clash: I'm not sure why, but it seems a good number of musicians are drawn to alcohol. You, yourself, almost died from it. Why do you think this is?

Walsh: Most of us are on the spectrum, obsessive compulsive, attention deficit, a little Asperger's [Syndrome] - mostly child conditions. When I was young in the fifties, modern medicine hadn't diagnosed any of that. You were just a difficult kid. I went to the principal's office a lot, and I didn't understand it [laughs]. Most musicians are insecure people with big egos.

Really early in my life, I achieved success I never thought possible. I was somebody. That's great, but I didn't know how to process it. I'm a guy from Ohio, and all of a sudden I'm famous. I was really uncomfortable going on stage. Initially, I found that a couple of beers really helped, made me feel, "All right, I'm ready to go!" We all have stage fright.

As I became more successful, the more afraid I became. Alcohol was an attempt to self-medicate. Then, everybody I knew, especially the English musicians, drank after the shows, and I did, too. I'm an alcoholic, but didn't know it then.

Then there were other substances I experienced. Over a period of time, without noticing, I got dependent on the stuff. My cocaine and alcohol convinced me that I couldn't play without it. I saw my buddies go down, crash and burn, and I knew that was going to happen to me. I got sober before I died, and I'm grateful to still be here.

Clash: I know you're a FCC-licensed ham radio operator, and have been most of your life.

Walsh: I'm totally into it, [call sign] WB6ACU. I got my novice license in 1961, and have been a ham ever since. Besides guitars, I love old analog equipment. It works perfectly well, but it's obsolete. In 1961, in the back of the ARRL [American Radio Relay League] handbook, and in those ads in QST [magazine], all kinds of pieces of equipment were listed. And I wanted all of them. They are on eBay now, and not that expensive, so I've bought the stuff I had always wanted. That feels great, but I don't use it. [Hence the Hammarlund short wave VetsAid auction item.]

I had Hallicrafters equipment for a long time. Now I'm running Icom. I also run a thousand-watt broadcast transmitter converted to 80 meters [frequency band]. There's a really good community of AM guys up and down the west coast, even in Alaska sometimes, and down to Phoenix. They get on the air every Wednesday night with all-analog stuff, and we talk.

I have a 70-ft. antenna tower. I also like getting on SSB [Single Side Band] and CW [Morse code]. The sunspot cycle is such that the bands are now wide open. I'm not really a DX [long-distance] guy, but have contacts with maybe 40 countries and 40 states.

Clash: What's it like when other hams realize that you're rocker Joe Walsh?

Walsh: People know my call now. I'm treated with respect, but it's not like, "Oh my God!" It's more like, "Hey Joe, how are you doing? I love your work. What kind of equipment do you have?" I can just be Joe on my radio. I love that.

Some people don't even know I'm a guitarist, and I don't flaunt it. But it's really nice to talk to people on their level. It's grounding for me. In fact, I have some life-long friends I've met through ham radio.

Clash: Fascinating. I've been a ham myself going back to 1968, and echo all you just said. My call sign is WA3JID.

Walsh: Are you still on the air? If so, talk to my media people and we'll set up a contact date and time.

Clash: That sounds great. I certainly will!

By Jim Clash Jim Clash covers extreme adventure and classic rock. Over three decades of writing for Forbes, Clash, who holds an MBA from Columbia University, has penned four books, most recently Amazon bestseller "Amplified," about '60s music.. He can be reached at jmclash2@outlook.com

Monthly Contests: Jan 2026

(From ARRL, QST, Great Lakes Newsletter)

- February 1 -- North American SSB Sprint Contest (phone)
- February 3 -- ARS Spartan Sprint (CW)
- February 4 -- UKEICC 80m Contest (CW)
- February 5 - 6 -- Walk for the Bacon QRP Contest (CW)
- February 7 - 8 -- LABRE-RS Digi Contest (digital)
- February 7 - 8 -- Vermont QSO Party (FT8)
- February 7 - 8 -- 10-10 Winter International Winter Contest, SSB (phone)
- February 7 - 8 -- F9AA Cup (CW)
- February 7 - 8 -- European Union DX Contest (CW, phone)
- February 7 - 8 -- Mexico RTTY International Contest (digital)
- February 7 - 8 -- Minnesota QSO Party (CW, phone)
- February 7 - 8 -- FYBO Winter QRP Sprint (CW, phone, digital)
- February 7 - 8 -- British Columbia QSO Party (CW, phone)
- February 7 - 8 -- [North American Sprint \(CW\)](#)
- February 9 - 13 -- [School Club Roundup \(CW, phone, digital\)](#)
- February 10 -- DARC FT4 Contest (digital)
- February 11 -- NAQCC CW Sprint (CW)
- February 13 - 14 -- YLRL YL-OM Contest (CW, phone, digital)
- February 14 -- PODXS 070 Club Valentine Sprint (CW)
- February 14 - 15 -- CW WW RTTY WPX Contest (digital)
- February 14 -- Asia-Pacific Spring Sprint (CW)
- February 14 - 15 -- Russian PSK WW Contest (digital)
- February 14 - 15 -- KCJ Topband Contest (CW)
- February 14 - 15 -- Dutch PAC C Contest (CW, phone)
- February 14 - 15 -- SKCC Weekend Sprintathon (CW)
- February 14 - 15 -- OMISS QSO Party (phone)
- February 14 -- RSGB 1.8 MHz Contest (phone)
- February 14 - 15 -- Balkan HF Contest (CW, phone)
- February 15 - 16 -- Run for the Bacon QRP Contest (CW)
-

Please Check the ARRL, QST and Great Lakes Contest pages for a complete list of the January times, dates, etc.

Special Events: November 2025

Feb. 14, 1700Z- 2300Z, AB5ER, Romance, AR. North Central Arkansas Amateur Radio Service. Valentine's Day Special

Event. 14260. Certificate. Roger Gray, North Central Arkansas Amateur Radio Service, P.O- Box 166, Searcy, AR 72145-0166. www.ncaars.org

Feb. 14 - Feb. 16, 1600Z- 2300Z W0JH, Stillwater, MN. Stillwater (MN) Amateur Radio Association (SARA). **Ice Station W0JH-- Frozen Minnesota Lake Portable**, 3.860 7.260 14.260 21.360. Certificate. Shel Mann, 1618 Pine St. W., Stillwater, MN 55082. www.radioham.org

Feb. 14 - Feb. 22, 0000Z - 2359Z W7P, Flagstaff, AZ. Northern Arizona DX Association. **6th Annual Pluto Discovery Anniversary S.E.** 7.266 14.266 21.366 28.366, Certificate & QSL. W7P- Pluto Special Event, 6315 Townsend Winona Rd., Flagstaff, AZ 86004. www.nadxa.com

Feb. 21, 1300Z - 2100Z K3S, Odenton, MD. Nuclear Ship Savannah Amateur Radio Club. **War Shipping Administration Created 1942.** 7, 14, 21, 28. QSL. Ullis Fleming, 980 Patuxent Rd., Odenton, MD 21113. www.qrz.com/db/k3s

Feb. 23 - Apr. 21, 0000Z - 2359Z WA5DTK, Montgomery, TX. Republic of Texas SES History Operators Club. **Republic of Texas SES.** 7.030 7.230 14.040 14.260 QSL. Barry Brewer, 10519 Bilising Ct., Montgomery, TX 77356.

Feb. 25, 1500Z- 2359Z, W7ASL, Mesa, AZ. Sunlite Amateur Radio Club. **Annual Snowbird Field Day.** 14.329 21.329 28.329 50.329. QSL. Tom Goforth, 4324 E. Dragoon Cir., Mesa, AZ 85206. www.sunlifearc.org

-Feb. 28, 0000Z- 2359Z, N4R, Sparta, TN. KR4EE. **2026 Rare Disease Day Special Event.** 14.070 14.080 21.074 28.074. OSL. Jill Dybka, 7737 Sparta Hwy., Sparta, TN 38583. KR4EE@arri.net

Feb. 28, 1400Z- 2200Z, WQEBB, Leavenworth, KS. Kickapoo ORP Amateur Radio Club. **Freeze Your Keys-22nd Winter Operating Event.** CW: 7.035 14.058, SSB: 7.240 14.325. GSL. Gary Auchard, 34058 167th St., Leavenworth, KS 66048. Please send a SASE with your OSL card. Other bands will be used also if open. wOmna74@gmail.com

Collected from February QST 2026

Working special event stations is an enjoyable way to help commemorate history. Many provide a special QSL card or **certificate!**

Certificates and QSL cards: To obtain a certificate from any of the special event stations offering them, send your QSO information along with a 9 x 12-inch self-addressed, stamped envelope (3 units of postage) to the address listed in the announcement. To receive a special event QSL card (when offered), be sure to include a self-addressed, stamped business envelope along with your QSL card and QSO information.

Monthly DX Information:

Bulletin is made possible with information provided by The Daily DX, 425 DX News, DXNL, OPDX, Contest Corral from QST, and the ARRL Contest Calendar and WA7BNM websites. Thanks to all.

MAURITIUS, 3B8. Matt, DL5PT, is QRV as **3B8/DL5PT from Flic-en-Flac until the end of March.** Activity is in his spare time on 20 through 10 meters using FT8. QSL to home call.

RODRIGUES ISLAND, 3B9. Robert, **3B9FR**, has been QRV on 10 meters using FT8 around 1600z. QSL to home call.

SRI LANKA, 4S. Peter, DC0KK, is QRV as **4S7KKG until the end of March.** Activity is on 60 through 6 meters using FT8, and on Satellite QO-100. QSL to home call.

NAURU, C2. Phil, FK1TS will soon be QRV as **C21TS and here until July.** Activity will be on the HF bands using FT8. QSL to home call.

THE GAMBIA, C5. Przemo, SP3PS, and Magda are QRV as **C5SP and C5MB**, respectively, **from Sanyang until March 2026.** Activity is on 40, 20, 15, and 10 meters using SSB, FT8, and FT4. QSL direct via SP3PS.

ENGLAND, G. Special event station **GB50PUNK** is QRV during **2026** to celebrate the birth of Punk Music 50 years ago.

GUINEA-BISSAU, J5. Livio, IZ3BUR is QRV as **J52EC until March.** He has been active on 15 and 10 meters using SSB. QSL direct to home call.

DESECHEO ISLAND, KP5. A group of operators are QRV using remote control as **KP5/NP3VI until February 14.** Activity is on 160 through 6 meters using CW, SSB, and FT8. QSL via M0OXO.

SOUTH SHETLAND ISLANDS. Station **LZ0A is QRV until February 16** and has been active on 20 meters using SSB around 2300z. QSL via LZ1JZ.

WESTERN SAHARA, S0. Members of the Sahrawi Amateur Radio Union club station will be QRV as **S0S beginning February 3 and active for 8 to 9 days.** Activity will be on Satellite QO-100 using mostly SSB, and possibly FT8 and FT4, from a variety of grid squares in the area. QSL via LoTW.

PALAU, T8. Operators JR3QFB, JA1MFR, JA1JRE, JA1MEJ, and 7K4TKB are QRV as **T88JH, T88KY, T88MH, T88MT, and T88YL, respectively, until January 31.** QSL to home calls.

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC, TL. Joao, CR7BNW, is QRV as **TL8BNW until June 2026.** Activity is on 40, 20, 15, and 10 meters using SSB and FT8. This may also include 160 meters. QSL via LoTW.

BENIN, TY. Gerard, F5NVF, is QRV as **TY5GG until April 6.** Activity is on the HF bands. QSL via LoTW.

BELIZE, V3. Walt, W0CP, and Mary Kay, K0ZV, will be QRV as **V31DJ and V31DK, respectively, from Placencia Village from February 1 to 27.** QSL to home calls.

KITTS AND NEVIS, V4. John, W5JON, is QRV as **V47JA from St. Kitts, IOTA NA-104, until February 3.** Activity is on 160 through 6 meters using SSB and FT8. QSL direct to home call.

ANTARCTICA. Tom, VK2TBC, will be QRV as **VK0TBC from the Australian Casey Base from February until December.** QSL to home call.

INDONESIA, YB. Dave, PB2X is QRV as **YB5/PB2X from Sumatra, IOTA OC-143, until February 5.** Activity is on 80 through 10 meters, including 30, 17, and 12 meters, using CW, SSB, and FT8. QSL direct to home call.

THIS WEEKEND ON THE RADIO. The North American SSB Sprint Contest, NCCC FT4 Sprint, Weekly RTTY Test, QRP 80-Meter CW Fox Hunt, NCCC Sprint CW Ladder, K1USN Slow Speed CW Test, Feld Hell Sprint, UBA DX SSB Contest, Marconi Club ARI Loano Slow CW QSO Party, and the Real Time Contest are on tap for this upcoming weekend.

K1USN Slow Speed CW Test, ICWC Medium Speed CW Test, OK1WC Memorial, RSGB 80-Meter Club SSB Championship, ARS Spartan CW Sprint, Worldwide Sideband Activity Contest, QRP 40-Meter CW Fox Hunt, Phone Weekly Test, A1Club AWT, CWops Test, VHF-UHF FT8 Activity Contest, Mini-Test 40 CW, Mini-Test 80 CW, and the UKEICC 80-Meter SSB Contest are scheduled for February 2 to 4.

Hamfests: (Fun places to go to!) (from ARRL Website)

**03/15/2026 - Toledo Mobile Radio
Association Hamfest and Computer
Hamfest**

Location: Perrysburg, OH

Sponsor: Toledo Mobile Radio

Website: <http://www.w8hhf.org>

Swap and Shop:

For Sale:

DX Engineering OMNI-Tilt Vertical Antenna Tilt Base, Brand new never set up, List price at DX Engineering is \$163.97. Would like to get \$100.00.

SignalLink USB Interface, cable and software \$75.00

Icom 7300. Asking \$950.00

Yaesu FT-891 Asking \$500.

Astron 50 AMP Power supply Excellent condition \$225.00

Heil Microphones 2 -HM-10-5 with Boxes. \$100.00 for the pair

Please contact Dan Whitt, W8DJW at 419-366-3256

From a recent Silent Key the following items are available:

SPE Expert Amp 2K. List \$6,995.00. Asking \$5,000.00

Kenwood TS 890S Transceiver. List \$4,329.95 Asking \$3000.00

Kenwood SP 890S Speaker. List \$ 285.99 Asking \$200.00

**Kenwood TS480HX. 200 Watt Unit no Automatic Antenna Tuner List \$1499
Asking \$800.00**

MFJ Deluxe RF Preselector II. Asking \$75.00

**MFJ. HF/SWR Analyzer Asking \$175.00 each
2 Available**

**Max 2000 Antenna. HF Base Station 24 FT (New, still in Box). List \$319.00
Asking \$250.00**

If interested in any of the above items, please contact Ron Dyke, KZ4CW at 423-231-6315 or email address. rondyke2000@yahoo.com

Topic for the Month

Chasing Special Events

Chasing Amateur Radio special event stations (SES) involves identifying active stations, efficient operation during pileups, and securing QSL cards or certificates. The best process combines utilizing online resources to find

events, mastering pileup techniques, and ensuring proper documentation for awards.

1. Locate Special Event Stations

- **ARRL Special Event Listing:** The primary source for finding upcoming special events, which often include details on the event, callsigns, and frequency ranges.
- **QRZ Forums:** Look for the "Contests, DXpeditions, and Special Events" forum for announcements.
- **Spotting Networks:** Use DX Summit, DX Watch, or other cluster sites to find where special event stations are currently active.
- **Look for 1x1 Callsigns:** Many special events use temporary 1x1 callsigns (e.g., K1A) to increase visibility.

2. Prepare for the Contact

- **Check the Event Page:** Determine if the station is offering a QSL card or certificate and note the requirements (e.g., SASE, donation).
- **Review Frequencies:** Special events are commonly active on 80m (night), 40m (day/night), and 20m (day).
- **Listen First:** Always listen to the station's operating habits before transmitting to determine if they are working "split" (transmitting and receiving on different frequencies).

3. Techniques for Working the Station

- **Wait for "QRZ":** If the station is busy, wait until you hear them call "QRZ" or finish a previous contact.
- **Send Only Your Callsign:** When calling, send only your callsign, not the special event station's call.
- **Use Standard Phonetics:** Clear, standard phonetics are essential in high-traffic situations.
- **Handle Pileups Efficiently:** If the station is overwhelmed, they may only take specific partial callsigns to manage the flow.
- **Keep it Brief:** Unless it is not busy, keep your contact under 5 minutes to allow others to participate.

4. Post-Contact Procedures

- **Confirm the Contact:** If a special QSL card is offered, send a 9x12 inch self-addressed, stamped envelope (SASE) with your QSO details (Call, Date, Time in UTC, Band, Mode).
- **Use Online Logging:** Many stations use digital logs or upload to LoTW (Logbook of the World) for faster confirmation.
- **Send Necessary Information:** If a certificate is involved, provide all requested info for that specific event, such as your location.

Key Tips for Success

- **Digital Modes:** For faster, more efficient contacts, especially with younger operators, focus on FT8 or JS8Call.
- **"Paper Chasers":** Many operators collect certificates, so pay close attention to the requirements listed on the special event's website or QRZ page.
- **Timing:** Multiple stations often use the same special event callsign on different bands/modes simultaneously, so check various bands to increase your chances.
- **Search for Special Events Stations - ARRLSpecial Event Stations ...** Contact these stations and help commemorate an historical occasion or other special event. Many special...

So, How Important would an Amateur Radio Operator be should the following happen on a very large scale???

The Day the Cell Towers Died

Verizon customers across the U.S. lost service a few Wednesdays ago, inconveniencing millions—including one grumpy columnist



By
[Joanna Stern](#)
[Follow](#)

Jan. 15, 2026 at 12:06 pm ET

Dear Silence,

I know I should have enjoyed the time with you. I should have thanked Verizon Wireless and [its nationwide outage](#) for reminding me what life was like before the constant notifications and neverending feeds.

Except, I was in my car. In the dark. An hour and a half drive away from my house. Staring at an ominous “SOS” icon instead of the usual 5G service bars on my iPhone.

I couldn’t get directions since Google Maps wouldn’t load—and I didn’t have my MapQuest printout because it wasn’t 2002. I couldn’t call my family to tell them I was getting on the road. I couldn’t even stream the Police classic “[Message in a Bottle](#)” and dramatically sing “Sending out an SOS!” as I sat in traffic.

Across the U.S. on Wednesday, Verizon customers in New York, Seattle, Los Angeles, Miami and elsewhere spent around 10 hours without service. For 10 hours calls failed. Texts didn’t send. Websites and apps refused to load. It was one of the longest U.S. cellular outages ever. And there wasn’t even a [natural disaster](#) to blame—or me forgetting to pay a bill.

[Verizon Communications](#) has apologized and said the issues were caused not by nefarious forces but by a software update. It’s offering a \$20 credit to those affected by the outage. (The company said it would be available in the myVerizon app.)

My lost-in-Brooklyn evening reminded me how dependent we’ve grown on cellular service and how uncertain I feel about my once-trusted carrier... “America’s most reliable network.”

When cell towers are out of reach, the iPhone shows an SOS and an icon indicating satellite messaging.

I first realized I had no cellular service around 1:30 p.m. while at a photo shoot in Williamsburg, Brooklyn. At first, I assumed it was a Me problem. I toggled the cellular data switch. I engaged in the ancient ritual of turning the phone off and on again. When I finally got on the studio's Wi-Fi network and saw the Verizon headlines, I figured — [given past outages](#) — that this wouldn't last long. Surely it would be back by 5:30 p.m., when I needed to drive home.

Nope.

Cell service isn't just in our phones, it's also in our cars. This actually worked to my advantage, because my car's native navigation system relies on [AT&T](#). (Can you hear me now, Verizon?) Instead of firing up Google Maps on CarPlay, I dug into my car's interface and opened the navigation app I never use—because it's ugly and lacks the live traffic data and other real-time updates I've grown attached to.

Even by the time I made it home around 7 p.m., calls were still failing. It was only at 10:15 p.m. that service was restored. An email from a Verizon spokeswoman said, "The outage has been resolved." Her previous statement: "We let many of our customers down and for that, we are truly sorry. They expect more from us."

We do expect more. Or at least we used to. In September 2024, there was another widespread Verizon outage. The once-dependable network famous for the "[Can you hear me now?](#)" guy, Verizon feels like one of the shakier cellular options these days. Yet somehow it's still one of the most expensive. Last spring, Verizon said it would [freeze monthly rates for three years](#) for a large swath of its customers. How about a rate reduction?

We've had half a decade of 5G. Five-plus years of relentless ads promising a faster future, blazing speeds and robot surgeries performed from outer space. And yet I've been here too often lately, holding an expensive glass slab that can't do the one thing phones were invented to do: make a call.

One of my colleagues couldn't show his digital train ticket on the commute home. On X, people shared stories with me about children who couldn't reach parents for pickups, or family members unable to get in touch to share devastating news. New York and other cities [warned that some 911 calls](#) could have been affected. Verizon says mobile devices can connect to any available cellular network to make an emergency 911 call.

([Satellite messaging on newer iPhones](#) and Android phones can also help, if you have a view of the sky.)

I realize this may sound like petty complaining. Oh, could you not feed your family because your cellular service didn't work? But spend a day without connectivity and you quickly realize how much of modern life now revolves around it—even in a world saturated in Wi-Fi. No payments, no ride hailing, no two-factor codes.

And more and more of our lives—from self-driving cars to home robots—will depend on what's supposed to be a reliable cellular backbone.

So yes, Verizon, "SOS." Please Save Our Service!

Write to Joanna Stern at joanna.stern@wsj.com

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Appeared in the January 16, 2026, print edition as 'The Day the Cell Towers Died'.

Attention Everyone

Next meet is February 7, 2026 Breakfast at Denny's at 7:00 AM and social hour starting around 8:15 AM at Sandusky County Chamber of Commerce Building, 1245 Napoleon Street, Fremont, Ohio. Meeting starts at 9:00 AM. D. Ron Dyke, KZ4CW