

The Mt. Vennon Amateur Radio Aub

Rugust, 2008 Rewsletter



Local Ham Community

K8EEN Repeater: 146.790 Mhz (-600 Khz With PL of 71.9 Hz) KD8EVR Repeater: 442.100 Mhz (+5Mhz With PL of 71.9 Hz)

Sunday Night ARES Net at 9:00 P.M. on The K8EEN Repeater Wednesday Night Social Net at 9:00 P.M. on the KD8EVR Repeater

Ham Radio Rockyl

5TH ANNUAL NATIONAL PREPAREDNESS MONTH COMING THIS SEPTEMBER

(From The August ARRL Club Newsletter)

SIGN UP YOUR CLUB or ARES GROUP NOW! Groups and individuals can register to become members by visiting www.ready.gov, and clicking on the National Preparedness Month banner.

WASHINGTON -- The U.S. Department of Homeland Security announced today that more than 1,200 national. regional, state and local businesses and organizations have pledged their support and joined the 2008 National Preparedness Month Coalition. Sponsored by the department's Ready Campaign, National Preparedness Month helps to raise awareness and promote action by Americans, businesses, and communities on emergency preparedness.

"As we approach our fifth National Preparedness Month, I want to thank the hundreds of coalition members who are making a difference in their communities by helping raise the basic level of preparedness in our country, said Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff. "Individual preparedness is the cornerstone of Experience shows that if emergency preparedness. Americans take steps ahead of time, they stand a much better chance of coming through an emergency unharmed and recovering more quickly."

The Ready Campaign and Citizen Corps (www.citizencorps.gov) are specifically encouraging individuals across the nation to take important preparedness steps. These steps include: getting an emergency supply kit, making a family emergency plan,

being informed about the different emergencies that may affect them, as well as taking the necessary steps to get and become engaged in trained community preparedness and response efforts.

National Preparedness Month Coalition members have preparedness agreed distribute emergency information and sponsor activities across the country that will promote emergency preparedness. Membership is open to all public and private sector organizations. Groups and individuals can register to become members by visiting www.ready.gov, and clicking on the National Preparedness Month banner.

Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee Chairman Joseph I. Lieberman and Ranking Member Susan M. Collins, along with House Homeland Security Committee Chairman Bennie G. Thompson and Ranking Member Peter T. King, will serve as honorary Congressional Co-Chairs of National Preparedness Month 2008.

Together, they will lead the effort to increase public awareness about the importance of emergency preparedness on Capitol Hill and throughout the country.

For more information on the Ready Campaign and Preparedness Month, please National visit www.ready.gov or www.listo.gov. Information is also available by phone at 1-800-BE-READY or 1-888-SE-LISTO.

February 2008 marked the Ready Campaign's fifth year at the Department of Homeland Security. Launched in 2003 in partnership with The Advertising Council, Ready is designed to educate and empower Americans to prepare for and respond to emergencies, including natural disasters and potential terrorist attacks. It has proven to be one of the most successful campaigns in

Ad Council's more than 65-year history. Since its launch, the campaign has generated more than \$703.2 million in donated media support. Individuals interested in more information about family, business and community preparedness can visit www.ready.gov or call 1-800-BE-BEADY to receive free materials.

Linking up with the Ready.gov people and participating in September's National Preparedness Month, is an easy win. The federal people are already doing all the hard work. All you really have to do is sign up. Most clubs and ARES groups are already doing activities which fit into their structure, so why not get credit for your actions? Of course if you do something more with this opportunity, so much the better! But you have to sign your group in and no one can do that for you. There are hundreds of ARES groups and clubs in the country. Wouldn't it be fun to have even 70% of them sign up and get noticed? Go to www.ready.gov, and click on the National Preparedness Month banner.

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MAKE SURE YOU HAVE THE CORRECT DATE FOR OHIO QSO PARTY

This is a short note to all ARRL members in Ohio that there has been misinformation about the dates of the Ohio QSO Party. It is Saturday, August 23 to Sunday, August 24. Here is a short note from Jim Stahl, K8MR, about misinformation which I repeat for everyone - many other ham radio sources may make this mistake as well.

Joe Phillips, K8QOE Ohio Section Manager

The Calendar of Events in the August 2008 "CQ Magazine" (page 96) erroneously lists the Ohio QSO Party as being on August 30-31. It is actually on Saturday, August 23, to Sunday, August 24.

There are no contests listed for the weekend of August 23-24. I suspect there are wrong dates for several of the others listed for August 30-31.

I hope to see you all in the OQP on SATURDAY, AUGUST 23! Full info at <www.ogp.us>.

Jim Stahl, K8MR

MVARC

Mt. Vernon Amateur Radio Club Minutes for the June 9, 2008 Meeting. By Jeff Butz, N8SMT, Club Secretary



Attendees:

1	Don Blizzard	W8UMH
2	Don Bunner	KB8QPO
3	Barry Butz	N8PPF
4	Ruben Clark	KB2SAI
5	Jeff Butz	N8SMT
6	Tom Evans	KD8HSA
7	Larry Helzer, DVM	AA8WP
8	Dick Huggins	N8RDH
9	Mike McCardel	KC8YLD
10	Don Russell	W8PEN
11	Tony Spiegel	KC8UR

President McCardel formally called the business meeting to order at 7:15 P.M.

EC Report: Ruben Clark, KB2SAI.

GOBA is coming up June 14th – 21st they will be in Knox County Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday morning. They expect 2000-3000 riders. Tony Spiegel and Barry Butz volunteered to help. Ruben had maps of the route for members to see.

Ruben talked about putting the repeater in weather watch or warning mode the DTMF codes and how to return it to normal mode. Ruben encouraged anyone that deems it necessary to start a weather net.

Wed. Night Dinner Report: Dick Huggins, N8RDH.

Wednesday they had 7 people. Next Saturday is at Ryan's Steak house.

Field Day Report: Doc Helzer, AA8WP.

Doc said if anybody had suggestions now was the time. He has some last minute shopping to do otherwise he is ready.

Don Russell (W8PEN) discussed the number of towers and radios that will be set up.

Old Business:

Mike sent a check to Tom Hain our previous speaker as approved at the previous meeting.

New Business:

No new business.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:55 P.M.

MVARC

Mt. Vernon Amateur Radio Club Minutes for the July 14, 2008 Meeting. By Jeff Butz, N8SMT, Club Secretary

Attendees:

1	Don Blizzard	W8UMH
2	Don Bunner	KB8QPO
3	Barry Butz	N8PPF
4	Jeff Butz	N8SMT
5	Tom Evans	KD8HSA
6	Larry Helzer, DVM	AA8WP
7	Mike McCardel	KC8YLD

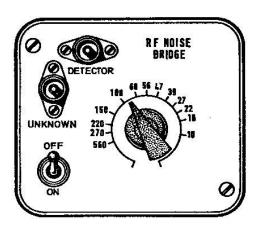
President McCardel informally called the meeting to order at 7:00 +/- P.M.

Mike introduced Tonight's Speaker, Barry Butz, N8PPF who gave an explanation on the operation of the 2-meter repeater system.

The meeting was adjourned for a field trip to the repeater site at the Mount Vernon City water tower of State Route 3 near the fairgrounds.

Barry pointed out the various subunits of the repeater such as the receiver, transmitter, computer controller, backup battery, power supply, and the duplexer and their various functions.

Upon completion of the tour, the group returned to the Red Cross Center for coffee, cookies and group radio discussion therapy.



Treasurer's Report

Aug 1, 2008 for July

Income:

Interest: \$.02 Donations for Field Day: \$ 120.00

Expenses:

Field Day: \$ 95.06

Balance on 8-1-08: \$2105.63

Designated Funds

Year 2005 Repeater Fund: \$684.94

Field Day Fund: \$133.24

Barry N8PPF

Using a Mac in the Shack

By Dan Romanchik, KB6NU

A couple of years ago, I decided to switch to the Mac for business use. (Iam a freelance website developer.) I haven't regretted it for a second. The thing just seems to work better.

Last October, I decided to switch to a Mac in the shack and purchased a used, iBook G4 Mac laptop. Unfortunately, I can't say



that I've never regretted this move. The reason I sometimes regret this choice is that there just aren't as many ham radio programs available for the Mac as there are for the PC, and those that are available are either more expensive than their PC counterparts or don't work as well.

For example, let's take a look at logging programs. When I first started looking, I found one that was kind of expensive (MacLoggerDX:

www.dogparksoftware.com/MacLoggerDX.html);

one that was free, but didn't want to work so well (RUMLog: http://www.dl2rum.de/rumsoft/RUMLog.html); and one that worked OK and cost somewhere in between the first two (Aether: www.aetherlog.com/). Considering that there are at least a dozen logging programs that run on a PC, this was slim pickings.

I ended up purchasing Aether, but was never very happy

with it. For one thing, it took forever to do any kind of sort or look up previous QSOs. Another pain was that it carried over none of the information from the previous contact, so you had to enter all of the information from scratch, even if you didn't change frequencies or bands. It also had an odd way of doing notes about a contact, and I was disappointed to find out that it didn't import the notes from the ADIF file I created from the N3FJP logging program I used previously.

For PSK, It's CocoaModem I had much the same experience when looking for a PSK31 program. Instead of a the wide variety of PC PSK programs, I only found a couple of Mac programs that decode PSK. Fortunately, I am much happier with my choice here (cocoaModem - homepage.mac.com/chen/index.html). It's a great program, with a polished user interface, and it's free, to boot.

The only problem with cocoaModem is that it doesn't support the wide range of digital modes that some of the PC programs do. One I'm interested in is SSTV. Unfortunately, cocoaModem doesn't do SSTV.

A Happy Ending Well, a couple of weeks ago, I'd had enough of Aether and decided to start searching for logging software again. Since RUMLog was still free, I decided to give the new version (v 3.0, March 15, 2008) a go. I'm happy to report that this version likes my computer a lot better, and I like using it a lot!

One of the coolest things is that it did import the notes from my N3FJP ADIF file properly. So, now, when I type in a callsign, the program searches the database, finds all the previous contacts I've had with that station, and then displays them in spreadsheet style WITH the notes. If I've taken notes about a previous conversation, I can pick up right where I left off. Very cool.

It also has a very nice way of showing you what countries you've worked, on what bands you've worked them, and whether or not you've QSLed that country or not. Not only that, it shows what type of QSL you have, either a paper QSL or a Logbook of the World (LOTW) QSL. And, after you supply your user ID and password, it will download your LOTW QSLs and update the appropriate QSO records. Very cool!

Still unresolved is what to use for contesting. None of the programs I've seen so far are useful for contesting, and I think that what I will end up doing is using my old PC laptop running N3FJP or N1MM software. I'm not a big contester, so I think I can live with that.

One thing is for sure--I'm not going back to the PC aside from some niche applications like contesting. The Mac's ease of use and ease of setup has won me over. For information on even more ham radio software for the Mac, go to www.machamradio.com.

When not trying to convince his friends and family to convert to the Mac, Dan works a lot of CW and PSK, and even a little SSB, on 20, 30, and 40m. You can read more about his adventures in amateur radio by pointing your Web browser to www.kb6nu.com.

RADIO-ACTIVITY

By Don Russell, W8PEN

Well, my annual fishing trip to New York is over. Like Field Day, at the end you start making plans for improvement.



Fishing was okay this year. Not as good as in the past. In fact, the last

several years have been off big time fishing wise. This year was a fair improvement over last year, and the locals say fishing is improving. Maybe there is hope.

One thing I did improve on this year was ham radio. Our camp grounds is right along Lake Erie, just across the Pennsylvania boarder, about 15 to 20 miles into New York.

I usually take my hand helds and occasionally an HF rig. Then we get busy and I never try to work HF, although the 2-meter stuff is used a bit.

This year, I made a real effort to get on the air. I brought my Yaesu FT-847, key paddles, microphone, etc. I had my mobile antenna, an 8 foot Huslter antenna with traps for 40 and 20 meters. I also brought with me my 40 through 10 meter windom antenna that we have used on Field Day. Barry, N8PPF, was made aware of my intentions, and we were hoping to make contact with each other on an afternoon. I can remember when I had HF in the car driving back and forth to Columbus each day. New York contacts were easy on 40 meters almost every afternoon.

As luck would have it, our first attempt failed. I did not hear Barry and he did not hear me. Then I tuned around the band, and except for a few weak signals, 40 meters was dead. I chalked it up to band conditions and planned on trying again. So I switched to 20 meters and did make a few contacts on SSB. Then I went back to 40 meters and made a very enjoyable CW (Morse Code) contact. In retrospect, maybe Barry and I should have tried 20 meters. I did not even consider it then.

It was two days before I had a chance to try again. This time, I could hear Barry, although he was weak. I could understand him. Barry could hear me too, but could not make out anything I said. In part due to the mobile antenna for sure, but band conditions were still up and down. I did make a few contacts on 40 meter SSB

though, so the afternoon was enjoyable.

I should have put the windom up. I think we would have had success, but I was stubborn. I had forgotten my 20 foot mast I was going to bring, so I would have had to hang the windom in the trees. Something the camp authorities would frown on, for sure.

The windom has a balun were it is fed, so it fairly heavy. I started thinking that if I had had a lighter weight antenna, I just might give it a go. It has been a while since my last antenna idea was written up, so here goes:

What I needed was a very light weight antenna that could be hung on a 12 foot fiber glass fishing pole that I had bought a few years ago. Actually, this is just a 12 foot pole. It has no fishing line guides on it. This is the more expensive version of the cane fishing pole, which is made out of bamboo. You are suppose to add your own guides for the fishing line. Well, I had bought this pole just in case I could use it as an antenna, so this was my chance.

Twelve feet is not very high, so I figure I may have to buy a ten foot section of 3/4 inch PCV pipe for the bottom of the mast. Then, the fiber glass pole would fit inside the pipe and be secured with a hose clamp. That would make my antenna 22 feet high at the center. I think I could live with that.

Next thing I need is a very light weight antenna. I have about a 100 feet of cat-45 computer cable. This cable has eight or so insulated Number 18 wires inside. I figured it would be easy enough to split down the middle and remove the wires. The insulator was going to be a piece of PVC tubing cut into a small square. There would be three holes. One for each antenna leg, and one to tie a string to and either attach it to my pole, or throw the string up in the tree for more height..

I decided that being only 22 feet high, the lowest band I would work would be 40 meters. This means each leg of the antenna needs to be about 33 feet long.

Next up was feed line. I needed really light weight feed line. I thought about some of the mini coax out there and quickly dismissed the idea. Using coax of any kind would limit me to one band. I wanted more options. Then I considered 300 ohm TV fed line, or the more common 600 ohm ladder line. These were rejected too as being too heavy to accomplish what I wanted to do.

Since I had plenty of number 18 wire, which is pretty light weight, I decided to make my own open wire feedline. Then I would run this into the antenna tuner.

As one can see in the picture, I thought of several different ways to construct my own open wire feedline. The ideas involved using electrical tape to hold the wires together. First I thought of taping the wires together in

the fashion of true ladder line. See the first feedline from left to right in the picture. Looks okay, but I did not think it would be very good at keeping the wires apart, unless I used plenty of tape.

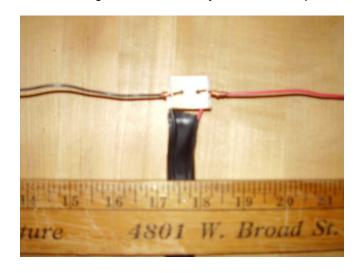
So, as in feedline in the center of the picture, I used two pieces of tape length wise. I then placed my wires about an inch or so apart, and then used two more strips of tape to secure the wires. I liked this better, but had one more idea.



The feedline on the right in the picture is just one piece of electrical tape. The wires are about ½ inch apart, and then another strip of tape is use to secure the wires so they remain the proper distance from each other. I think this is much better than the feedline in the center. Easier to make, and probably about 300 ohms, which should be just fine.

I selected the feedline on the right and created about 30 feet of feedline.

Next was to bring the antenna and feedline together. Using my homemade insulator and my homemade feedline, things worked out nicely, as in the next picture.



This created a really light antenna that will easily fit into a ½ gallon zip lock bag. It should put out a good signal on 40 through 6 meters, using an antenna tuner. The big question is whether the Feedline will take 100 watts of power without heating up.

Readers will have to wait until next month to find out, as I have not had time to complete this antenna yet.

Final pictures are of the fiber glass pole. I may give it a try at 12 feet. The antenna should work, even at that height.



And the fiber glass pole in its shortest position ready for travel:



73 till next month.....

OHIO SECTION AUGUST HAMFESTS:

Saturday (2) Columbus Hamfest and Electronic Show; Voice of Aladdin ARC; For more information, Contact kb8kpj@arrl.net; at the Aladdin Shrine Center, 3850 Stelzer Road, Columbus.

Saturday (9) NWOARC in Lima; for more information Email: kc0jdt@yahoo.com; at 2395 St. Johns Road, Lima.

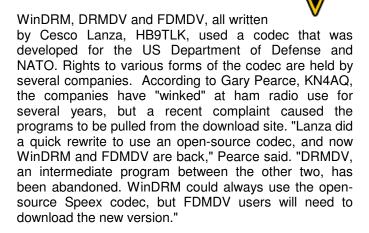
Sunday (17) 51st Annual Warren Hamfest; Warren ARA; for more information, visit < www.w8vtd.org > or write < kc8ral@yahoo.com >; at the Trumbull County Fairgrounds.

Sunday (24) Cambridge ARA; For more information, E-mail, n8mwk@arrl.net; at the Pritchard Laughlin Civic Center, Cambridge.

HF DIGITAL VOICE PROGRAMS ONCE AGAIN AVAILABLE FOR DOWNLOAD

From the ARRL Letter, August 1,2008:

Citing codec (coding/decoding) licensing issues, three free Windows programs for sound card-based HF digital voice were yanked from their download site for a short time recently, surprising hams who are interested in HF digital voice operation; several online groups that supported the software were also closed for a short time.



Pearce said these three programs all allow hams to transmit and receive digital voice by connecting their PC sound card to an ordinary SSB transceiver: "The result has been surprisingly high quality audio, with virtually no noise -- sort of like listening to FM, but in the narrow bandwidth of a sideband signal. WinDRM, the best

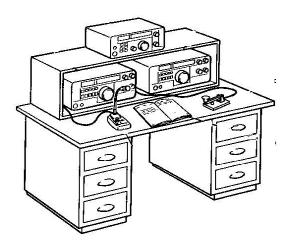
sounding program, uses 2.5 kHz of spectrum. FDMDV sounds a little rougher, but uses only 1.1 kHz of spectrum. They both use OFDM modulation, a set of close-spaced carriers that are each modulated with a little bit of data to add up to the final digital signal. The main problem with HF digital voice is that it needs fairly strong signals. FDMDV works better with weaker signals than WinDRM."

Pearce said that none of the available open-source codecs work as well as the old one: "MELP http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/MELP, or Mixed Excitation Linear Prediction, was designed specifically for high-quality, low data-rate voice communication. So the on-air audio might suffer some with the new version. Digital voice users have been waiting and hoping for someone to concentrate on developing a codec optimized for ham radio use, but none has been forthcoming."

FDMDV and WinDRM can both be downloaded from Jason Buchanan's, N1SU, Web site http://www.n1su.com/>.

The AOR digital voice modems and D-STAR radios both use the AMBE 2020 vocoder, and are not affected by the coding changes; the AMBE 2020 vocoder is a proprietary chip that is embedded in each unit.

For more information on WinDRM, check out QST Editor Steve Ford's, WB8IMY, article ["Life Could Be a DReaM," pages 38-40] in the April 2007 issue of QST.



MVARC Club Meeting is Monday, August 11, 2008 at 7:00 P.M. in the Red Cross Annex Building, 300 North Mulberry Street, Mt. Vernon, Ohio. The program for the August Meeting will be a "Show and Tell" night. Bring something you think is interesting and let us look at it. Or just bring a good story.

Please remember the long running Sunday Night ARES net at 9:00 P.M. Please note the change in time, which was effective May 4, 2008.

Also check out the new UHF net on the KD8EVR Repeater. This net runs each Wednesday at 9:00 P.M. This is a social net. Please join us for the fun of it.

Every Wednesday at 5:00 PM, MVARC club members meet at Wendy's, 522 South Main Street, Mt. Vernon, Ohio. Dinner Coordinator Dick Huggins, N8RDH, reports good turnouts for this event.

Come share dinner with friends, or make new friends, by attending one or all of these events. Family and friends welcome. You do not need to be a ham or club member to participate in this event.

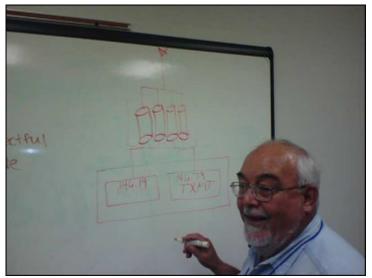
Come join MVARC club members every second Saturday of the month for breakfast. Each month we try a different place, so check the MVARC Newsletter for current information. Breakfast Coordinator Arlin Bradford, KD8EVR, can also be contacted for the latest news on the 2 meter or the 440 Mhz. Repeaters. Or tune into our ARES net each Sunday at 8:00 PM for current information.

The next Breakfast will be August 9, 2008 at 9:00 AM at Ryan's Steak House, 1515 Coshocton Ave., Mt. Vernon, Ohio.

Repeater Site Tour Big Hit!

Being on vacation, I was not able to make the July meeting, however, I understand it was a big hit. For those of you that missed it, the program for the month was a Field Trip to the K8EEN 2 meter Repeater site. This special trip was arranged by Repeater Tech Barry Butz, N8PPF.

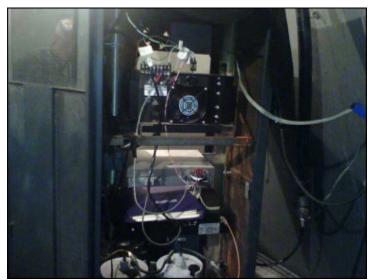
Below are some pictures from the event. Hope everyone found it interesting.



Barry, N8PPF, Explains the K8EEN Repeater system in prelude to the field trip.



This is the front side of the Repeater. From top to bottom, one will see the power supply, controller, repeater, and finally the duplexer. The can at the top right is an extra filter used to help with some intermode problems we had with the old repeater.



This is the back side of the repeater where all the wires run together. Again, from top to bottom: power supply, controller, repeater, and duplexer. A back up battery and charger sites at the bottom right on the floor.



This is the ladder that leads up to the antenna. You are talking about 140 feet or so. The view is tremendous from up there! I am surprised Mike, KC8YLD, did not climb up there and take a picture.

Pictures were from Mike McCardel, KC8YLD.

Don't forget to bring something interesting to the August meeting. It has been designated "Show and Tell" night. We usually have a good turn out and many interesting items during our show and tells. Mark this one on your calendar.

73, Don, W8PEN....

Ambilia among Radio Associatio

Hamfest and Computer Show

When: Sunday, August 24, 2008
Where: Pritchard Laughlin Civic Center
Cambridge, Ohio 43725



Setup Begins @ 7:00am Doors Open @ 8:00am until 2:00pm

Admission: \$5.00 Tables: \$10.00

Free Outdoor Tailgating (Weather Permitting)

ARRL VE Session © 12:00 NOON All Classes... Walkins Welcome

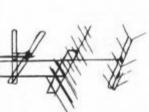
Door Prizes





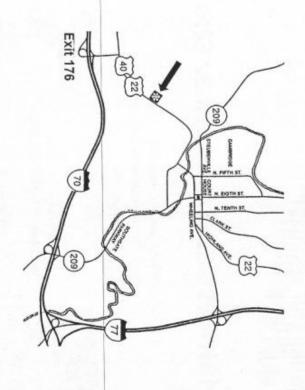
Food Stand





Pritchard Laughlin Civic Center

7033 Glenn Highway Cambridge, OH 43725 740-439-7009



Exit 176 off I-70, Go to Stop Light, Make a Right PLCC is 0.7 mile on Left side of Road

From Wheeling: Go West on I-70 to Exit 176
From Columbus: Go East on I-70 to Exit 176
From Marietta: Go North on I-77 then West on I-70 to Exit 176
From Canton/Akron: Go South on I-77 then West on I-70 to Exit 176

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The ARRL letter is a weekly e-mail publication by the ARRL. You may read the entire ARRL letter by visiting the ARRL Web page at http://www.arrl.org/. Other News from: http://ky4ky.com/fyi.htm.

The ARES E-Letter is an e-mail digest of news and information of interest to active members of the ARRL Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES). Past issues of The ARES E-Letter are available at http://www.arrl.org/ares-el/. Issues are posted to this page after publication.

Project OSCAR is a monthly column written for Newsletter Editors. Columns will appear as space permits. You may download all the columns yourself at: http://www.projectoscar.net/beacon.php

Members are encouraged to send articles pertaining to ham radio, with an emphasis on local activities, equipment reviews, and personal experience to wa8yrs@arrl.net or Don Russell, WA8YRS, 815 Brookwood Road, Mt. Vernon, Ohio 43050

Membership Form

Club dues run from Jan. 1 until Dec. 31 and are collected during the last quarter of the year. You can mail in the dues to the address below or bring them to a meeting. Dues are prorated for new members at the time of application. Visit our Web Page at www.mvarc.net

Dues Schedule: \$12 regular

\$10 for second member in the same family, for those over 65 yrs. of age, and for those living outside Knox County

Mt. Vernon Amateur Radio Club, P.O. Box 372, Mt. Vernon, OH 43050

Name	Call-Sign
Street	
City	StateZip Code
Phone Number	License Class
ARRL Member (Y/N)E-N	/lail
Extra Donation (Optional)	
Members are entitled to a free MVARC E-Mail address	. Would you like one? NoYes
f yes please enter password	
Other Comments:	

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