



Ham Radio Rocks!

The Mt. Vernon Amateur Radio Club

February, 2010 Newsletter



Meetings are held the 2nd Monday of each Month at 7:00 P.M. at the Knox County Chapter of the American Red Cross, 300 N. Mulberry Street, Mt. Vernon, Ohio

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**

WHAT HAPPENED TO OUR BOOKS?

By Barry Butz, N8PPF

Late in 2007 the club donated a group of ARRL books to the Mt. Vernon Public Library, at a cost of \$200. Included were the ARRL Handbook, Antenna Book, and other reference and instructional titles. For some time I have not been able to find any of them on the shelves, although I know they were there at one time and I borrowed a couple. Recently I inquired about them. After checking the computer the librarian told me "We have been ripped off." It seems all 9 or 10 books were checked out in mid-2008 by a single person and never returned. The person is known to the library but they have not been able to recover the books. This makes me very angry. I feel that the club as well as the library has been ripped off. There are a limited number of people in the area having an interest in ham radio. It is possible that the person responsible will read this article. If so, the library would be happy to find the books in the drop-box and no questions will be asked.

Technician Class Report

By Don Russell, W8PEN

The Club sponsored Technician Class is now in full swing and things are progressing wonderfully.

We have thirteen students in this class. Seven adults and six young



MVARC Club Meeting is Monday, February 8, 2010 at 7:00 P.M. in the Red Cross Annex Building, 300 North Mulberry Street, Mt. Vernon, Ohio. A program on the National Traffic System (NTS) has been proposed. Plenty of friendly "Ham Talk", and Story's will surely be available too. Please join us.

Please remember to check into the long running Sunday Night ARES net at 9:00 P.M. on the K8EEN 2-meter Repeater.

Also check out the UHF net on the KD8EVR Repeater. This net runs each Wednesday at 9:00 P.M. and 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.

Join MVARC club members every second Saturday of the month for breakfast. Breakfast Coordinator Arlin Bradford, KD8EVR, reports good turnouts for this event.

*****The next Breakfast will be February 13, 2010 at 9:00 AM at Allison's Finer Diner, 11587 Upper Gilchrist Road, Mt. Vernon, Ohio*** Please note that this is the Saturday after the MVARC meeting.**

adults. A fantastic mix and one of our largest classes ever.

The students really seem to be "into it" and I believe all thirteen will obtain their ham license during the February 27 test session.

There are several other gentlemen that are studying on their own because they could not make the classes. Each week I find the need to print up yet another study guide for someone interesting in getting their Ham license. This has been a really fun experience for me. Ham Radio seems to be alive and well, at least in Knox County.

We have five instructors and I would like to recognize each of them for dedicating their time and energy to this project. Jim Jennessee (KD8UT), Barry Butz (N8PPF), Mike McCardel (KC8YLD), Arlin Bradford (KD8EVR), and myself, Don Russell (W8PEN). I must say it is a pleasure to be working with so many hams dedicated to spreading the fun of Ham Radio.

Vice President Tony Spiegel, KC8UR, has donated a VHF commercial repeater to the club. I am hoping that this repeater is usable and we can use it to set up a "Kids Repeater". This repeater would provide a meeting place for our young hams where they could talk amongst themselves without adults interrupting (boring! Hi Hi). Adults would be allowed to monitor, but not check into this repeater unless invited or a true emergency developed. Think of it as a "young adult radio community".

This repeater could also be used as an extra repeater in case of a communications emergency in Knox County. Finding a frequency for this repeater may be a problem if it is indeed on 2 meters. Not sure there are any available in Central Ohio, but there is only one way to find out. I always thought we would set up a UHF kids repeater eventually, but we need to go with what we have.

points to 81.9. Geomagnetic indices were a tiny bit lower. We should be seeing sunspot numbers decline over the next five days. The predicted solar flux for January 28-31 is 78, 80 on February 1-2, 82 on February 3-4 and 88-89 for the following six days. We don't see any geomagnetic upset predicted until February 16, with the planetary A index only rising to 10. On the [STEREO image](#), we can see sunspot 1041 in the Sun's southern hemisphere, past the central meridian. We also see a sunspot emerging from the unseen area of the sun (currently around 12.5 percent, not visible yet to the STEREO mission) that is perhaps five days from emerging over the Sun's eastern limb. Look for more information in the Solar Update -- including some clarification, correction and expansion of the info in [last week's bulletin](#) concerning SID (Sudden Ionospheric Disturbance) events from Dick Grubb, WOQM of the Space Weather Prediction Center in Boulder, Colorado -- available on the ARRL Web site on Friday, January 29. For more information concerning radio propagation, visit the [ARRL Technical Information Service Propagation page](#). This week's "Tad Cookism" brought to you by William Blake's [Ah! Sunflower](#).

MVARC Mt. Vernon Amateur Radio Club



By Jeff Butz, N8SMT

Minutes for the January 11, 2010 Meeting.

Attendees:

- | | | |
|-----|-----------------|---------|
| 1. | Tony Spiegel | KC8UR |
| 2. | Steve Barr | KD8GRM |
| 3. | Jeffrey L. Butz | N8SMT |
| 4. | Larry Helzer | AA8WP |
| 5. | Don Bunner | KB8QPO |
| 6. | Kreig Williams | Waiting |
| 7. | Brandon Hunt | KD8LPP |
| 8. | Arlin Bradford | KD8EVR |
| 9. | Don Russell | W8PEN |
| 10. | Barry Butz | N8PPF |
| 11. | Tom Evans | KD8HSA |
| 12. | Jim Jennessee | KD8UT |
| 13. | Jon Penko | KD8LFI |
| 14. | Phil Buble | N1GTZ |

Are the Sunspots Back?

From the ARRL Letter,
January 28, 2010

Tad "[Who countest the steps of the Sun](#)" Cook, K7RA, reports: We've seen average daily sunspot numbers for this reporting week. Since last Thursday through yesterday, the numbers rose more than 9 points to 28; the average solar flux slipped more than 2



The Sun, as seen on Thursday, January 28, 2010 from [NASA's SOHO Extreme Ultraviolet Imaging Telescope](#). This image was taken at 304 Angstrom; the bright material is at 60,000 to 80,000 degrees Kelvin.

President Bradford formally called the business meeting to order at 7:16 P.M.

Treasurers Report: Barry Butz, N8PPF

Interest	\$991
Dues	\$176
Donations	\$5
Balance:	\$2857.45

Barry announced he is collecting dues for next year if someone wants to pay tonight.

Technician Class/Exam: Arlin Bradford, KD8EVR

Classes will begin Thursday, January 14th from 7 to 9 P.M. and will end on February 25th with the exam scheduled for February 27, 2010 @10:00A.M.. Arlin also asked for volunteer session teachers.

Field Day Committee: Larry Helzer, AA8WP

Doc wanted to double check that we wanted to go out to Apple Valley again this year and the consensus was yes we should

Old Business:

Vehicle Status: Arlin Bradford, KD8EVR

We are still waiting for the revised paperwork from the City of Mt. Vernon.

Website: Arlin Bradford, KD8EVR

The website has been updated and Arlin has been keeping the calendar updated so it is current.

Emergency Vests: Arlin Bradford, KD8EVR

Arlin demonstrated the emergency vests he has purchased for the emergency vehicle. It is a Walls Brand vest and they are available from TSC and Wal-Mart.

New Business:

Repeater: Tony Spiegel, KC8UR

A friend of his bought a used Motorola Repeater from OSU for \$50.00 in 1999 and wants to donate it to the club. Tony would like the club to evaluate the repeater and if it is useable; for the club to reimburse his friend \$40.00 and have the club write a letter of appreciation to his friend. Tony made a motion to that effect. The motion was seconded by Larry Helzer, AA8WP and was approved by voice vote.

Kids Day, Don Russell, W8PEN

Don suggested the club hold a "Kids Day" for the local children to introduce them to Ham Radio by having them

get on our repeaters and making some contacts. We could also pass out a certificate for the kids to keep after it was over. Arlin mentioned that the next ARRL Kids Day is June 19th. Don made a motion that we put on a "Kids Day" this year. The motion was seconded by Steve Barr, KD8GRM and was passed by voice vote. Arlin asked Don Russell, W8PEN to chair a committee for Kids Day and asked Brandon Hunt, KD8LPP and Jon Penko, KD8LFI serve on the committee. They all said they would serve.

A motion to adjourn was made and passed by voice vote. The meeting was adjourned.

Where are the Ham Radio Hackers?

By Dan Romanchik, KB6NU

On the Ten-Tec Omni VII
Yahoo Group



<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Ten-Tec-Omni-VII/>,
one ham wrote:

"If I was 17 years-old I would be hacking I-phones and other items like George Hotz, the 17 year-old from New Jersey who was able to unlock the Apple I-phone so that it could be used on other cell service networks.

"When I was his age, I was hacking dial telephones. Then one day the phone company showed up at my house. My parents were not impressed with my technical abilities.

"This morning there is a story that George has just hacked the 'un-hackable' Sony 3 Play Station. He says the hack was 95% software and 5% hardware.

"A quick check of the modifications site run by that guy over in Denmark, shows that there are NO MODS for the O7...interesting. I just wonder how many strange and wonderful things can be done with those 36 buttons/switches on the front panel. Can the O7 be made even better?"

In my reply, I asked, "Why stop at pressing some buttons on the front panel? Why doesn't someone really hack the Omni VII and develop a completely new software package for it?" Rigs like the Omni VII and the Elecraft K3 would seem to be perfect candidates for this kind of hacking.

Sure, there is an order of magnitude difference between a \$300 iPod and a \$3,000 radio, but we're big boys, aren't we? Besides, aside from overdriving the finals, what real damage can you do to the radio? It seems to me that even if you manage to screw up the software in the rig, you can get back to square one by simply re-loading the manufacturer's software.

Ham radio operators have a long history of modifying their radios. Page through any stack of QSTs or CQ Magazines from the 1950s, 60s, and 70s, and you'll find many articles describing modifications to the popular radios of the day. About the only thing hams do to their rigs today is to clip a diode to allow it to operate out-of-band.

What does it say about the technical capabilities of today's hams that we haven't yet done with our gear what some 17-year-old kid has done with the iPhone and the PlayStation? Why don't we have any third-party software for Omni VII or the K3? I think if a manufacturer actually encouraged third-party software development, they'd quickly gain a following and make their brand even stronger, don't you?

Dan Romanchik, KB6NU, blogs about ham radio at www.kb6nu.com, teaches the infamous One-Day Tech Class, and operates a lot of 40m CW. E-mail him your comments and questions at cwgeek@kb6nu.com.

Treasurer's Report

Jan 30, 2010
for Jan 1 to Jan 30, 2010

Balance on 1-1-10: \$ 2857.45

Income:

Interest: \$ 1.06
Dues: \$ 102.00
Donations: \$ 9.00
50-50: \$ 8.00

Expenses:

Red Cross Training: \$ 96.00

Balance on 1-30-10: \$ 2881.51

Designated Funds:

Year 2005 Repeater Fund: \$ 348.94
Field Day Fund: \$ 64.92
Communication Vehicle Fund: \$ 540.18

We now have 34 members who are paid up for 2010. If you're unsure if you are current, please check the membership list on the MVARC web site. Thanks.

Barry Butz N8PPF

Learn Morse Code Online

Want to finally learn Morse Code? Visit LCWO, for **Learn CW Online**. This is a real neat site, and looks like a very easy way to learn Morse Code. Not just for beginners! I have been practicing word groups to improve my CW skills. Sign Up for a free account and the site will track your progress. It is actually very fun. Point your browser to <http://lcwo.net/> and finally learn Morse Code.

Don Russell, W8PEN

Spotlight on Amateur Radio: 2009 Sees Surge of New Amateur Radio License

(From the ARRL Letter, January 7, 2010)

NEW FCC LICENSES ISSUED 2005 THROUGH 2009					
Year	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Jan	876	1,274	1,647	1,755	1,960
Feb	1,357	1,605	2,435	2,998	2,263
Mar	1,705	2,531	3,478	2,816	3,463
Apr	1,486	1,728	2,673	3,090	3,430
May	1,651	2,283	2,607	2,562	2,717
Jun	1,493	1,967	2,281	2,402	3,011
Jul	906	1,401	1,786	2,077	2,220
Aug	1,500	1,623	2,183	2,084	2,102
Sep	1,139	1,357	1,462	1,763	2,116
Oct	1,385	1,781	2,109	2,303	2,404
Nov	1,540	1,993	2,132	2,197	2,344
Dec	1,330	1,569	1,935	2,019	2,114
Totals	16,368	21,112	26,728	28,066	30,144

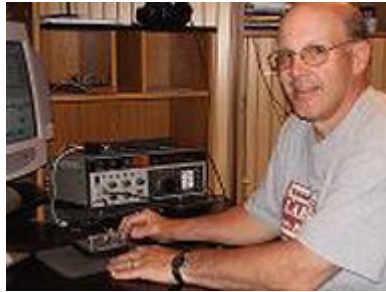
This past year was a banner year for new Amateur Radio licensees. According to ARRL VEC Manager Maria Somma, AB1FM, the FCC issued more than 30,000 new ham radio licenses. "In 2009, the demand for Amateur Radio exam sessions remained elevated and is still running at a higher rate than before the FCC's restructuring of the license requirements in 2007," Somma said. "This high level of exam session activity has produced an elevated influx of new applications, far outpacing recent years." A total of 30,144 new licenses were granted in 2009 -- an increase of almost 7.5 percent from 2008. In 2005, 16,368 new hams joined Amateur Radio's ranks; just five years later, that number had increased by almost 14,000 -- a whopping 84 percent!

Radio Activity

By Don Russell, W8PEN

Is Knox County Ready for Digital? Part III

For Parts 1 and 2, please see the November and December, 2009 issues of this Newsletter



In Part II, I promised a look at Fldigi (I have been pronouncing it Fligeee.).

My computer is a Compaq laptop with the Vista Operating system installed. We have all heard of the problems Vista seems to create. I have been pretty lucky in this respect as I have been able to work around soundcard issues when using Vista. Most Ham Radio digital software will work with Vista. The main drawback is that rather than adjusting sound levels (both in and

out) using the built in software options of a digital program, one needs to go into the Vista Control Panel to make those adjustments. Not a big deal, but it can be a pain. On my laptop, I only need to go into the microphone input panel to make adjustments. The Headphone out can be adjust by the volume control which is easily accessed through the Task Bar. This may or may not be the case with a Desktop computer.

There are several things I really like about Fldigi. First and foremost, it has lots of digital modes to try out. As new digital modes are created, I am sure there will be program updates to include these new modes. Second, I like the Rig Control section. The rig control will track frequency change so the only thing you really need to put in the logbook is the call, name, and location. Oh, did I mention that Fldigi has a built in logbook? This logbook is easily imported to your main logbook program. I like it! Like many of the Ham Radio Digital Mode programs, Fldigi is free to download and use. Here is the Download Site:

<http://www.w1hki.com/>

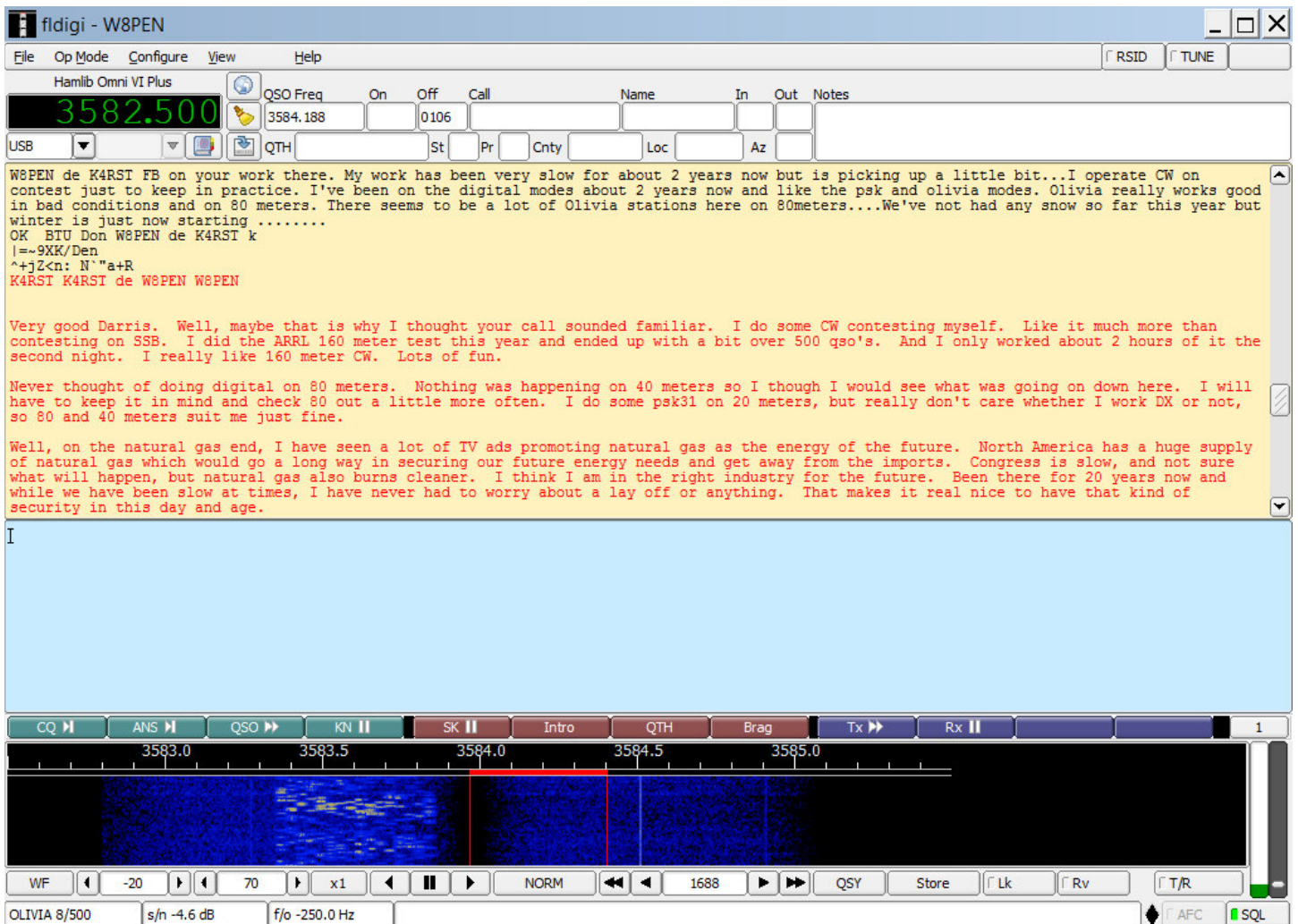


Figure 1

When I first started Fldigi, I got a "No records in ADIF Logbook File" error. Had to think about this. It shouldn't happen. I clicked "close" on the error message and the programs main screen came up. The error message goes away after you log your first contact. Still should not happen though.

The main screen looks like Fig. 1, which is a screen shot of a QSO I had using the mode Olivia 8/500. The first thing you may notice is the frequency display in the upper left. Because I had my rig connected to the laptop, this display is accurate. If rig control is not set up, one can manually enter the frequency. I do not think this feature works very well. I had trouble entering in the frequency when the rig was not corrected.

Top center is the log book entry area. Okay, there should be some information in here. I took this snap shot of the screen after I had entered the log into the database. My fault. Normally, this would have information entered in about the contact. One neat feature is that you can double click the stations call, name, location, and state after it appears on the receive screen and the information will input to the logbook screen. Used to be you had to copy and paste. I like that feature.

The area that contains the actual QSO is what I call the receive screen. However, it not only displays what is being received; it also displays what has been sent. One can scroll up and down from the beginning to the end of the display if desired. If you are reading this in color, then you will notice the station being worked is being displayed in black letters and the transmitting station (me) is being displayed in red. Makes it easy to review.

The blank area directly beneath the display area in the transmitted text area. It actually shows up in black as you type and converts to red as the text is being sent so that you know how far ahead you are typing. Yes, you can backspace and make corrections without the other station knowing it if you are typing enough ahead.

Below the transmitted text display are several buttons in which one may set up macros. Very useful for slow typists or redundant information. There are buttons for calling CQ, answering a CQ, call exchange during a QSO, Signoff text, and several other buttons. These can be programmed in any manner one wishes and makes the prelim's easy to deal with.

When setting up these macros, one can have the program turn on the transmitter at the beginning of the macro and switch back to receive at the end of the macro. Nice feature. This feature is also available with most other digital programs.

Below the macro buttons is the waterfall display. This area displays whatever signals are on the band while you are monitoring. Looking at the waterfall in figure one,

there is an area with white specks and fairly spread out. This is another Olivia signal in a QSO. The station I worked has signed off. I did not think of printing the screen before he signed off. That would have been a good picture.

Below the waterfall is a few informational areas that I have not figured out yet. Been too busy having fun. One of these days I will figure it out.

Fldigi is a good program. I have some problems with it though. One of the big problems I have is that changing bands requires me to exit Fldigi and rerun the program to get my rig control working again. Another problem I have is that when I exit the program, I always get an error. These are the two biggest problems I have run across. I can deal with them. Could be that both problems could be fixed by switching to an operating system other than Vista. I might try running it in XP compatible mode and see what happens.

Other than the above, I have had no problems using digital modes with Fldigi. It is fairly user friendly and seems to decode signals that are just barely audible or barely being shown on the waterfall. Sometimes it is interesting to listen to the signal fade to nothing, yet there is still 100 percent copy on the display screen.

There is an exception to this. Fldigi does not decode Morse Code very well. Yes, that is one of the digital modes available, but I have learned over the years that there is nothing like the good old human ear to decode Morse Code. I have yet to find a program that decodes Morse Code nearly as well.

If you are looking for a solid program for your digital communications, Fldigi would be a good candidate.

One last comment. This series started out with Fldigi perhaps being a good tool during emergency communications. That has not changed. I just have not had the opportunity to give that part of Fldigi a try. Maybe later.



ARRL Sends Ham Aid Equipment to Haiti



donation to work is to give via credit card on the [ARRL's secure Web site](#). Checks may be made payable to ARRL Ham Aid and sent to 225 Main St, Newington CT 06111. For more information, contact ARRL Chief Development Officer Mary Hobart, K1MMH, via [e-mail](#) or by telephone at (860)594-0307.

From the ARRL News Website:

Even though the communications infrastructure in earthquake-ravaged Haiti is being rebuilt, there is still need for Amateur Radio communications. To assist in this effort, the ARRL's Ham-Aid program is providing equipment for local amateurs to use.

On Friday, January 22, the League sent a programmed Yaesu VHF repeater with a microphone, as well as ICOM handheld transceivers, Yaesu mobile 2 meter rigs with power supplies and Kenwood mobile 2 meter rigs. Comet antennas, Larsen mobile antennas with magnet mounts, coax and batteries were also included in the package that was shipped to the home of the President of the Radio Club Dominicano ([RCD](#)) for distribution. Most items were donated by their manufacturers; the repeater and power supplies were purchased several years ago using post-Hurricane Katrina grant funds.

"In the horror of this tragedy, there still are stars and the cooperation between the ARRL, IARU Region 2 and the Radio Club Dominicano and has been bright," said ARRL Media and Public Relations Manager Allen Pitts, W1AGP. "It was donations from our members and friends that began the Ham Aid program in Katrina's aftermath. Now once again, that sharing between hams will provide help in another worst-case incident. ARRL members and donors need to know that their gifts will be used very well indeed."

How You Can Help in Haiti:

The ARRL Ham Aid Fund welcomes your contribution! In 2005, the ARRL established the Ham Aid Fund to accept contributions in support of Amateur Radio's response to Hurricane Katrina and hams responded generously to help ARRL send equipment to the affected area. "Now we are facing another devastating event in Haiti and Amateur Radio is ready to respond," said ARRL Chief Development Officer Mary Hobart, K1MMH. "With equipment contributed by our generous industry partners, the ARRL invites contributions to the Ham Aid Fund from hams who wish to help ARRL deploy equipment where it is needed most. Contributions from Amateur Radio clubs and individuals in any amount will go directly to supporting Amateur Radio's response efforts in Haiti."

Hobart explained that the easiest way to get your



ARRL The national association for AMATEUR RADIO

A promotional graphic with a yellow background and a blue border. It features the text "Support Your Radio Club!" in white on a blue background at the top. Below that, "Join or Renew Your ARRL Membership" is written in black serif font. At the bottom, "TODAY!" is written in white on a blue background.

Mt. Vernon ARC Officers

President:	Arlin Bradford, KD8EVR	kd8evr@mvarc.net	Phone: 740-627-0922
Vice President:	Tony Spiegel, KC8UR	tony516@embarqmail.com	Phone: 740-392-7586
Secretary:	Jeff Butz, N8SMT	Javlynn@copper.net	Phone: 740-965-9368
Treasurer	Barry Butz, N8PPF	n8ppf@mvarc.net	Phone: 740-397-7540

Newsletter Credits
Editor: Don Russell, W8PEN

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.

Members are encouraged to send articles pertaining to ham radio, with an emphasis on local activities, equipment reviews, and personal experience to w8pen@arrl.net or Don Russell, W8PEN, 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 _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Phone Number _____ License Class _____

ARRL Member (Y/N) _____ E-Mail _____

Extra Donation (Optional) _____

Members are entitled to a free MVARC E-Mail address. Would you like one? No _____ Yes _____

If yes please enter password _____

Other Comments: