



Ham Radio Rocks

The Mt. Vernon Amateur Radio Club January, 2015 Newsletter



Meetings are held the 2nd Monday of each Month at 7:00 PM 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

Christmas Dinner Highlights

The Mt. Vernon ARC Christmas Dinner was a huge success. Club members and their families enjoyed a very nice dinner and surely passed ham radio stories from table to table.

This year, the club had door prizes consisting of a donation to the club by Don Sprague, KA8CLE. The prizes were in the form of used equipment and winners will have fun checking the equipment out. Now that is the ham radio spirit.

Election of 2015 officers was held. Results are elsewhere in this Newsletter.

Jim Jenness, KD8UT, held his final meeting as club president. Thanks Jim for all the good work. The rest of this article is in the form of pictures so we can get everybody in. Please see the pictures beginning on page 8.

Election of Club Officers for 2015

Ballots were cast for 2015 officers during the December meeting held at Parkside Restaurant. The Following were elected to club leadership roles:

President: Frank Counts KC8EVS
V. President: Tom Evans, KD8HSA
Secretary: Jim Williams N8IBR
Treasurer: Tony Spiegel KC8UR

Elected as Board of Directors were:

David Byrd KD8RST
Emery Bennett W8TW

The next meeting of the Mt. Vernon Amateur Radio Club will be Monday, January 12th at 7:00 P.M. in the Red Cross Training Center, 300 North Mulberry Street, Mt. Vernon, Ohio.

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

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.

Retired club members meet each Friday at 10:00 AM for a breakfast at Hardy's, 998 Coshocton Ave., Mt. Vernon, Ohio. Come enjoy some good Ham Radio Fellowship and conversations. Oh, you don't have to be retired to join us. Contact Emery Bennett W8TW or David Byrd KD8RST for more information.

Join MVARC club members every second Saturday of the month for breakfast.

This is a fun event with great food.

The next Breakfast will be Saturday, January 10th at 9:00 AM at Allison's Finer Diner, 11587 Upper Gilchrist Road, Mt. Vernon, Ohio

Board of Directors are two (2) year terms. The current Board of Directors consist of:

Emery Bennett	W8TW	Through 2016
David Byrd	KD8RST	Through 2016
Barry Butz	N8PPF	Through 2014
Jeff Butz	N8SMT	Through 2014
Don Russell	W8PEN	Through 2014
Don Blizzard	W8UMH	Through 2014

Minutes December 6th, 2014 Mt. Vernon Amateur Radio Club Meeting

The annual Christmas Dinner Meeting was called to order by President KD8UT at 6:04 P.M.

Motion to approve both Treasurers and Secretary Reports as published in the December newsletter. Moved and approved.

KC8BB presented the list of candidates and ask for any last minute nominees for club officers. He then presented the following list of members for election:

KC8EVS-President	KD8HSA-Vice-President
KC8UR-Treasurer	N8IBR-Secretary
W8TW-Board of Directors	KD8RST-Board of Directors

After the ballots were cast and counted, there were no write-ins, and the announced nominated candidates were elected to office. Congratulations to all elected officers.

Each member was given a ticket at the meeting, KD8UT then conducted a series of drawings to distribute equipment donated to the club by KA8CLE. The following members were winners in this drawing;

N8PPF	N8RLW	KC8UR	KD8WSI
KD8UT	KD8HSA	KC8BB	W8PEN
W8TW	AC8PT		

Congratulations to the winners of this unexpected and fun event.

KD8UT then reviewed the numerous operating events, classes, guest meeting speakers, club publications, and social get together's that the club participated in during 2014.

There were 18 members and 10 guest present.

The club thanked retiring club President KD8UT for his leadership for the past two years.

The meeting closed at 6:32 P.M.
Respectfully submitted,
N8IBR Secretary MVARC

DIY Headset and Boom Microphone

By Don Russell, W8PEN

One of the Field Day stories I like to tell is the time I lost my lightweight Heil headphone / boom microphone .

Several years ago we worked until dark setting up antennas at our Field Day site. I had brought an HF rig and my Heil headset out to the site so I could test the antennas. Everything worked as expected. So, I loaded up everything and took off for home.

What I didn't know was that my headset was caught in the back door and dragging on the road as I made my trip home. Needless to say, the headset was pretty much destroyed by the time I got it home. I threw it on the table in the shack to work on it at another time.

Eventually that "another time" arrived. Since the headphone itself was lightweight and ruined, I decided to take a close look at the microphone side. The boom was not damaged and the microphone looked okay. What I needed was a new headphone set to put the boom and mike on. Well, I decided that I should be able to clip the boom onto just about any headset I had available. That way, if I tired of one headset during a contest, I could switch to another one.



Boom Mic with Alligator Clip

The picture shows what was left. Notice that I added an alligator clip to the end of the boom. Now I can clip it on to any headphone I wish. I usually have it on my FM stereo over the ear headphones. It has a source input, which works great as a ham radio headset.



Boom clipped to Headphones

This makes a very comfortable headphone / boom microphone for contesting.



Happy Face with my homebrew headphones

AFFILIATED CLUBS COORDINATOR REPORT



By: John Myers, KD8MQ - ACC
kd8mq@arri.net

Hi everyone, This month, I've got a bit of a potpourri of subjects. Let's begin by offering some congratulations.

First, congratulations to the Bellbrook ARC, who have become our newest Special service Club. At this writing, our Section Manager, Scott, N8SY was planning to attend their

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meeting to present the SSC certificate personally.

Next, we just received word that the Central Ohio Contest Association, in Hebron has become our newest affiliated club in the Ohio Section! According to Fritz, WD8E, they wanted to become an affiliated club during the centennial year.

We'd also like to congratulate the Warren Amateur Radio Association on their 75th anniversary this month. To celebrate, they went out to Mosquito Lake State Park, and activated it as a special event.

Also, I totally missed another important milestone. The Queen City Emergency Net celebrated their 75th anniversary last month; November 4th, to be exact. Belated congratulations go out to them. And lastly, I'd like to congratulate Susie Scott, N8CGM as she retires after 30 years as editor of the Q-Fiver, which is the newsletter of the OH-KY-IN Amateur Radio Society.

So, as 2014 draws to a close, let's take a look at where we're at club-wise in the Ohio section. There are currently 97 affiliated clubs in the Ohio section; only eight of those are Special Service Clubs. Out of 96 Ohio section clubs, only about half of you are up to date on your club reports. That's great, but we can & should do better.

Filing your club reports is a big deal. It can be done online, and can be done whenever there's something to update in your club information. That's right, you don't have to wait till after elections. Remember, the more accurate your club info at the league, the better the league is able to help you.

Updating your club information only takes a moment to do, and it's painless. Just go to your club record on ARRL.org, and click on the edit button. Complete instructions on can be found here: www.arrl.org/club-update.

A few weeks ago, an article that appeared in the Des Moines Register caused some discussion on the ARRL PR reflector. The article was entitled Men support fading ham radio habit. The article implies that Amateur Radio is a fading hobby, for old Men. The article was promptly picked up by the AP, and ran in several other papers around the Midwest.

So, what has this to do with an Affiliated Club Coordinator column? Actually, it has quite a bit to do with it. Part of a clubs mission is to promote Amateur Radio, right? As part of your club activities, do you outreach to non-Hams? If so, do you tell them how you can listen for days without ever hearing a CQ, or about all the great things that Amateurs are doing with MESH, Arduino, and Satellites? How about showing them all the cool gear we use for portable operating? In other words show everyone that all the great stuff we enjoyed 30 years ago is still there, but that there is also so much more to enjoy in this hobby.

Anytime your club gathers, be it a meeting, Field Day, or even an on the air net, you have a chance to make an impression on someone. Will the impression be good, or bad? We should remember that we have multiple opportunities each year to fight this Old Guy in a Fading Hobby type of stereotype. It's

up to us to get the word out!

So, here's some of what's happening around the state. If you're club isn't mentioned here, perhaps it's because I am not on your newsletter mailing list. My E-mail address is kd8mq1@gmail.com. Perhaps you don't send out newsletters? Well. That's OK too. Just drop me a line to let me know how things are going, club-wise. What are you doing that works? What isn't working? Let me know. We'll share the best ideas in this column each month.

The latest issue of the CARA communicator edited by our new ASM, Lyn, N8IMW just arrived. It has reports from the clubs Field Day, and OSPOTA operations. Congratulations to the Cambridge for placing 5th in the state under the hi-power in a park, multi-op category.

Each November, the Portage County Amateur Radio Service donates the club's share of their 50/50 raffle to a local charity; the Center Of Hope, in Ravenna. By the time this year's donations were tallied, the total exceeded \$3500!

Gary, N8EMR recently presented a program on Arduino processors to the Mt. Vernon ARC.

Those attending Massillon Arc's mentoring session in February will be building an Offset Attenuator. The December issue of the Feedback also has an informative article by John, N8CD on Cross-Band Repeating.

The West Park Radio Ops will be doing a discussion & demonstration of D-Star at their January Meeting.

The program at the Alliance ARC's December meeting was title Your Best Ham Radio Memory, and consisted of a roundtable discussion where attendees took turns relating what made Ham Radio special for them. Subjects ranged from first QSOs, to Licensing Classes & Elmers, to operating WIAW this last summer.

Most clubs are having their Christmas dinners, and awards banquets this month, and next. Among them, Mt Vernon ARC, Alliance ARC, Massillon ARC, Portage County ARS, Cincinnati FM Club, Massillon ARC.

Till next time, 73 DE KD8MQ

The Mt. Vernon, Ohio Wireless Pioneer Project

By Robert Ballantine, W8SU
Reprinted with Permission of W8SU

Everett G. Taylor *1918-1985* W8NAF Of Mt Vernon

Ohio 611 Vine, to Hoy (engine works) and May Taylor, Everett (EV) as he signed on the air, is a clerk in a local drugstore in 1940 census, a sister Loma.

Ev earned his ticket when he was age 17 and was issued W8NAF. He had several types of QSLcards and seemed very active on 80 and 40 meters. He was a joiner and belonged to the old InnerCity Radio Club, which we know very little of. He had Navy service during WW2.

Ev's mother eventually found a good position as City Relief Director.

We find our subject expired in Davis, California and burial at Davis cemetery, Yolo County. I have collected several types of Ev's QSL cards, mainly from the K8CX Ham Gallery collection.

Now And Forever!

W8SU 2014

Radio-Activity



By Don Russell, W8PEN

Hope everyone had a Merry Christmas and an enjoyable New Years day. 2014 was certainly a good year for the Mt. Vernon ARC. With Jim Jennessee's (KD8UT) leadership, the club had its best Field Day ever, graduated more hams from the annual Technician Class course, and attracted more members from Mt. Vernon and surrounding areas. Those are just a few of the accomplishments the club had during 2014. Thank you Jim for your leadership and continued support of our club.

Congratulations and welcome to incoming President Frank Counts (KC8EVS). Frank has a tough challenge ahead, but I am sure he is up to it. Vice President elect Tom Evans (KD8HSA) will be at his side. I am sure that this team, along with the support of all of us, will help keep our club thriving and continue to be one of the friendliest ham clubs in Central Ohio.

Congratulations also go to David Byrd (KD8RST) and Emery Bennett (W8TW) for being reelected to the position of Club Directors.

To round it out, my congrats and appreciation go to Jim Williams (N8IBR) and Tony Spiegel (KC8UR) for being reelected to their positions of Secretary and Treasurer.

With such leadership, our club cannot go wrong.

Soundcard Interfacing

Last month I demonstrated a way to go digital without the need of a soundcard interface. It was pretty simple. I placed the microphone up to my earphones. That worked extremely well as long as one was not in a noisy environment. However, there are better ways. I promised last month to reveal a second way to go digital without a soundcard interface.

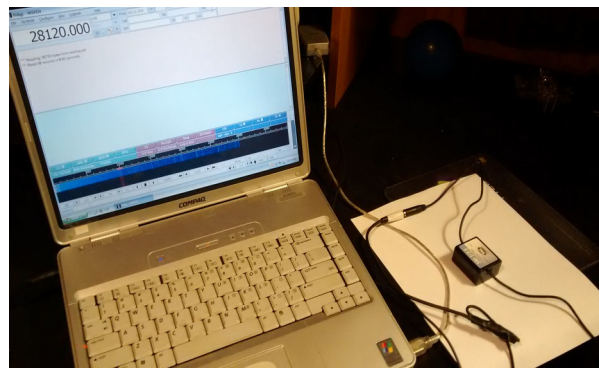
One could hook the computer speaker or line output directly to the microphone input on the transmitter. This does work for some but it has two problems associated with it. One is the risk of picking up hum via a ground loop. Two, is that the input to the transmitter will be extremely hard to adjust. The volume control on the computer will have to be almost zero, as will the microphone gain control of the transmitter.

After some research, I decided to try a ground loop isolator. These can easily be built using a 600 ohm 1:1 transformer and a small aluminum box. I decided to cheat and bought one through Amazon.com. For the \$12 I paid, I could not build one. Besides, I did try to find a 600 ohm transformer. They are hard to find. If interested one can follow this link to the one I bought:

http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B001EAQTRI/ref=oh_aui_detailpage_o03_s00?ie=UTF8&psc=1

Radio Shack has one, but it is a bit more expensive. Radio Shack would be a good choice though if one were in a hurry.

This isolator simply connects between the computer speaker or line output and the transmitters microphone input. Here is what my set up looks like:

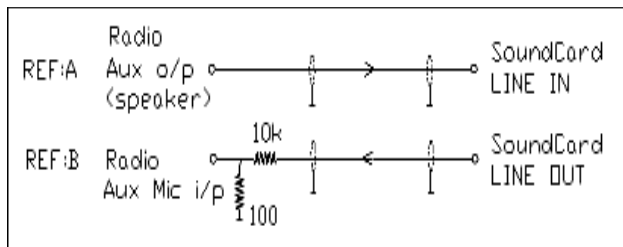


Ground Loop Isolator on the right

This works extremely well. I made many contacts on

PSK-31 using this. However, this set up has one of the same problems that is associated with running a cable directly from the computer to the transmitter. The computer audio out adjustment is very hard to make and I find a bit unstable. I will set my rig for 20 watts output. Next thing I know, it is up to 50 watts.

I solved this problem by adding a 100:1 attenuator in the line. I simply cut my cable in half and soldered the resistor network right into the cable. Then used electrical tape to cover up my work. Notice the cable loop in the picture. Here is a diagram of the resistor network I used:



This is on several INTERNET sites and is just about as simple as one can get. We are looking at the bottom diagram here. The top diagram is how to run the radio audio to the computer microphone or line input. Nothing needed here but a stereo audio patch chord.

If you do not wish to build an attenuator into your cable, Radio Shack sells an audio volume control cable (Model 4201097) for \$10 that may work for you. They also have an attenuating dubbing cable (Model # 42-2461) for \$7 that may work. It has an RCA connector on one end that would have to be converted to a to a 1/8" plug by an adapter or modification though.

Once set up, the tune up procedure is basically the same as with just the microphone and headphones:

1. Using a dummy load instead of your station antenna, tune your radio for normal 100 watt SSB transmission. Just like you were going to make a QSO on SSB.
2. Line isolator goes between the computer audio out (headphone jack or line out) to transmitter microphone in.
3. Now turn your microphone gain and your VOX gain down to ZERO. VOX delay should be set to less than half a second.
4. Hit the transmit button or the tune button on your digital software.
5. Using the transmit button on the radio front panel, increase the microphone gain until you have a reading of about 20 watts on your radios meter or your antenna tuner watt meter. You may have to increase or decrease the speaker volume at the computer to accomplish this.
6. Check your ALC meter. It should read zero or deflect just slightly. Release the transmit button. Click the receive button on the software.
7. Turn on the VOX. Once again, click the transmit or tune button on the software. Increase the VOX gain until the radio reliably goes to transmit when sending

the digital tones. This means clicking the software between transmit and receive several times.

8. You are now ready to transmit digital with a clean signal. Switch from your dummy load to your station antenna and have fun.

I have had very good luck using this system. It does not take as many cables as a true soundcard interface does. Two cables are all that is needed. I have really had fun DXing and Rag-Chewing with this digital setup.

See you all at the January meeting.

Wireless Headphones on the Cheap

By Don Russell, W8PEN

For several years I have been using an FM transmitter I bought at Walmart as a "hearing aid" while watching TV. I connect the FM transmitter to the audio output of the cable box so that I do not cut off the speakers on the TV. That way, those around me can still hear the TV. Then I use just about any FM receiver tuned to the FM transmitters frequency to listen.



Works so great for me that I have brought the FM transmitter along with me to the last couple of ARRL Field Days. I hook it to the transceivers headphone jack. Then I use my "over the ears" FM stereo headset. No wires to get in the way. I also have an FM receiver on the operators table so that visitors can hear both sides of the conversation.

It has just been recently that I have adopted this to my home station. Of course it works just as well at home as it does out in the field.

It is very nice to be able to get up and move around the shack without worrying about headphone cables. An additional advantage is that if I tire of the over the ear headphones, I simply grab my FM receiver with ear buds and use it for a while. There you will have wires to deal with, but I simply put the

receiver in my shirt pocket and stuff the additional wire in the same pocket. Then I am free to move around as I wish.

You might call it "bluetooth on a budget. Of course if you had bluetooth you could probably go wireless on the microphone as well. Hmmm.

FROM THE SECTION EMERGENCY COORDINATOR

By Stan Broadway, N8BHL
broadways@standi.com

OHIO ARES NVIS Antenna Day – April 25..

Get your antenna books out, get together with some friends and come up with a winner! The Ohio ARES NVIS Antenna day has been scheduled for April 25, 2015. Operating hours 10AM – 2PM. Frequency: around the Ohio ARES 40 meter frequency of 7.240 plus or minus, and around 3.850-3.870 plus or minus.

We have all been through several presentations of NVIS (Near vertical sky wave, or "Cloud burner") antennas. Sure, the concept is cool and it ought to work. But it's time to put away the antenna modelers, the calculators and theory and get down with some wire and some coax! Have you actually ~tried~ one of these? If there was a wide-scale disaster requiring you to communicate with nearby counties and Columbus (or other state capitals) do you have confidence you could actually make this work? The best way to find out is to try!

We're taking the lead from Ashtabula, who has had several annual antenna days that were a great success. The idea here is to actually ~build~ different NVIS antennas and try them out against each other. Come up with different concepts: vertical, horizontal, semi-something, and try different elevations from ground level all the way up to the towering height of, say, 20 feet. See which antenna does the best at working nearby counties, Columbus, and neighboring locations as if we were in a large-scale disaster.

This isn't really a contest, in the sense that we're not looking so much at lots-o-q so's as we are at comparing our various antennas. So it will be more beneficial to keep track of HONEST signal reports from the same station using our various antennas. We will want to have reports (including pictures?) of your various antennas and how they stood up to each other. From a simple grid or ranking of your best three or four performers, we can compare these across the state and come up with overall suggestions as the most desirable NVIS setup to have in your tool box. This information may come in very handy for your spring Field Day efforts! But we all know that Field Day, or any other similar contest, is NOT the time or place to be testing antennas- we are in it for QSO numbers and rates! So this is a great day to get some honest experimenting done!

And there's MORE!..We are strongly suggesting additional equipment for your field tests: a good grill, some hamburgers and side dishes! This should be far enough into spring that it will be nice to be outside (even with a jacket on) and it's an excellent time to have a picnic, get some fellowship in, and generally relax! So in your planning, include proximity to somewhere to eat! Use a park, someone's property, or be creative! Remember we're testing antennas, so next to a power plant might not be the best idea. The food and fellowship makes this great fun! And, we're not limited strictly to "ARES People". If your local radio club has some experts, draft 'em! It's all about the fellowship, the fun, and the feuding antennas!

More information will follow- but I would love to activate as many (or all!) Ohio counties as possible to make this a benchmark test!

Posted by: John Myers
<kd8mq.lists@gmail.com>

This sounds like a really neat idea. Anyone want to make this a club project? I already have an idea for a 40 meter NVIS beam antenna. Also an 80 meter 2 element quad might work. Don, W8PEN

A Brief Review of 2014

I would like to compliment the club membership on the number of events and services that they provided to our area this past year.

I know that the numerous Bicycle and Marathon events that the club assisted with proceeded more smoothly with the member's assistance.

Also, with the sponsored licensing classes and testing sessions we were able to gain more licensees in this great hobby.

Our Field Day operating event set a club record this year. We had many members also participate in other operating events on their own, often commenting on what a great time they had.

We had numerous informative and interesting guest speakers at club meetings.

And, we had a great number of social get-togethers where members were able to exchange conversation on numerous subjects both non and Amateur Radio related.

Thanks for the great work in 2014, and may we have as a successful year in 2015.

Jim Williams, N8IBR

CHRISTMAS DINNER PICTURES: GOOD TIMES AND GOOD FRIENDS





How do Weather Spotters
communicate?

When Disaster Strikes, how will
you communicate?

Ham Radio



“Whether you want to be
an effective weather spotter,
useful during disasters,
or just prepared,
you really need a ham license.”

HAM RADIO CLASSES NOW FORMING FOR THE TECHICIAN CLASS LICENSE

Date: Begins Thursday, January 15, 2015 and runs every Thursday through Feb. 26, 2015 from 7:00PM to 9:00PM. Exams will be held Saturday February 28.

Location: The Knox County American Red Cross, 300 North Mulberry Street, Mt. Vernon, Ohio. We are using the Training Center, which is the building in back of the Headquarters.

Cost: The course and course material are FREE. Exam fee is \$15.00 due at the time of the exam. Option to buy your first radio for around \$50!

Pre-Register for an early copy of the study guide. Walk ins are welcome.

Sponsored by the Mt. Vernon Amateur Radio Club. Free one year membership after taking this course and passing the exam.

Hams use Voice, Morse Code, and Digital modes to talk to the world. If you have fun with CB radio, Family Radio, or GMRS, you have to see what you can do with Amateur Radio!

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Visit our Web Page: <http://www.mvarc.net/>
Or our national club: <http://www.arrl.org/>

