The Mount Vernon Amateur Radio Club
PO Box 372, Mount Vernon, Ohio 43050

January, 2016

Meetings are held the 2nd Monday of each month at 7:00 pm
at the Knox County Chapter of the American Red Cross,
300 North Mulberry Street, Mount Vernon, Ohio

K8EEN Repeater: 146.790. MHz (600Khz with PL of 71.9 Hz)
K8EEN-R Echolink Node: 809800
KD8EVR Repeater: 442.100 MHZ (+5 MHz with PL of 71.9 Hz)

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

The View from the Presidents Desk

I hope everyone has enjoyed this holiday season as we celebrate Christ's birth and usher in a new year. I'm writing this just prior to Christmas and have some good news for the upcoming year. At our breakfast get together at Hardee's we were visited by Patrick Valentino (KD8PSM) who works with our local EMA office. He came to discuss the needs and wishes of the EMA Director Mark Maxwell. As most of you know, installed at the Sheriff's office is some amateur radio equipment. I believe (if my memory serves me correctly) one station with an Yaesu FT8800 (2M/440) and one station with a Kenwood TS2000 HF/2M/440. The HF station if I remember correctly is capable of digital using a Rig Blaster interface. They also have a communications trailer with a FT8800 installed for amateur use. Mark wants us to be involved and really sees the need for amateur radio in times of need here in Knox County. What he is asking for is up to four volunteers. These volunteers will be the core group to help set up the documentation and procedures for the use of the equipment and our involvement and training. They will work with the EMA department and the club to develop this.

To get started these four volunteers will need to have completed the first two FEMA courses (ICS 100 & 700). These are the basic courses and most agencies are starting to require these and have a background check completed. (our station is located in the sheriff's office thus this requirement).

All who work through this office will have to have this completed. As we have stated earlier the courses are on line and free, I suggest that you start on them sooner rather than later. The web sites are noted in a newsletter from a couple months ago. This is all that I know at this time. We have requested (Pat agreed) to develop a document defining our relationship (what is expected from us and what we can expect in return). As soon as I get this information I will pass it on. This is great news and I am excited that we are getting more involvement, it will mean that we will have to put in a little time and work. I know that there are several of you out there that would love to participate, so I'm looking for volunteers. It will require a small time commitment but well worth it in the end. If you are interested please let me, Tom (KD8HSA) or Jim Williams (N8IBR) know. We have to select four to get things started and go from there. I'm not sure of the selection process at this time but we will work something out. Your input is welcome.

It just struck me that this is the beginning of 2016, a lot has happened in 2015 and it looks like 2016 will have as much if not more in store for the club. Bobbie (KE8ANY) and I have been working on a yearly calendar that I would like to post on the web site, also I will have copies at the Jan 11th meeting. It is a work in progress and may/will change as we move into 2016 but it is something that we need so you can plan where/if you can join in. So check it often.

With the calendar in mind, if you see something there that really strikes your fancy and want to be more involved, i.e. helping in the coordination etc., let us know as help is always appreciated.

Continued from Page 1

Don (W8PEN) has volunteered to coordinate Field Day this year and will need some folks to help set up and run the different stations that he has in mind for this year. I'm sure that he will be bringing that up in the next couple of meetings as June seems to come quickly. Tom (KD8HSA) will be coordinating Ohio State Parks on the Air this fall.

PS: So you don't have to search the archives I looked up the web locations for the FEMA courses for you and they are below:

IS-100 http://www.training.fema.gov/is/courseoverview.aspx?code=IS-100.b
IS-200 http://www.training.fema.gov/is/courseoverview.aspx?code=IS-200.b

IS-700 http://www.training.fema.gov/is/courseoverview.aspx?code=IS-700.a

IS-800 http://www.training.fema.gov/is/courseoverview.aspx?code=IS-800.b

I look forward to making contact with you on the radio, at Hardee's or even the upcoming meeting, Jan 11, 2016 at 7:00 pm at the American Red Cross.

73

Frank, KC8EVS

==========

Greetings fellow hams! We have a new year and with it comes the first and in my opinion the best contest of the year, **Parks on the Air**.

The Contest begins January 1, 2016 and ends December 31, 2016. There will be three operating certificates available. Participants can be either single or team, QRP or legal limit.

I plan to take a trip to Chillicothe when it gets warmer and activate that park. Ten valid QSO's are required to activate each park. Each operator (s) must exit the park and 24 hours elapse to reactivate a previously activated park.

I believe there are half a dozen parks on the activation list for Ohio. The complete list and rules for the contest can be found here:

http://www.arrl.org/npota-rules

Let's make this year's Parks on the Air a success here in Ohio!!!

Scott Fields

K8AEC

The Mt. Vernon Amateur Radio Club Officers

President: Frank Counts, KC8EVS
fcounts@gmail.com
Phone: 740-358-3002

Vice President: Tom Evans, KD8HSA
tom65@embarqmail.com
Phone: 740-358-9131

Secretary: Jim Williams, N8IBR
n8ibr51@centurylink.net
Phone: 740-967-0627

Treasurer: Tony Spiegel, KC8UR
tony516@embarqmail.com
Phone: 740-392-7586

Call & Repeater Trustee:
Don Russell, W8PEN
w8pen@arrl.net
Phone: 740-397-0249

Equipment Trustee:
Barry Butz, N8PPF
n8ppf@mvarc.net
Phone: 740-397-7540

Directors:

Emery Bennett, W8TW
eabenn2002@hotmail.com
Phone: 740-397-8127

David Byrd, KD8RST
dbryd@roadrunner.com
Phone: 740-392-6325

Barry Butz, N8PPF
n8ppf@mvarc.net
Phone: 740-397-7540

Jeff Butz, N8SMT
jaylynn4@gmail.com
Phone: 740-965-9368

Don Blizzard, W8UMH
w8umh@yahoo.com
Phone: 740-392-9753

John Barr, KD8FXX
alumcreek@aol.com
Phone: 740-326-1090

Scott Fields, K8AEC
ballixxe@yahoo.com
740-393-2349

Terry Windsor, KE8ANS
ke8ans@gmail.com
740-507-6329

Newsletter Editor:
Bill Bradley, KC8BB
wljabradley@yahoo.com
Phone: 740-397-0267

MINUTES OF THE DECEMBER 6, 2015 MVARC CHRISTMAS MEETING

Meeting called to order by President KC8EVS at 5:47 pm.
KC8EVS thanked W8PEN and N8IBR for their services to the club in 2015.
He then mentioned the present CW class and the upcoming January Technician Class.
Motion to accept the November Secretaries report made by AC8PT, 2nd W8TW. Approved.
No Treasurers report was available.

A motion to accept the unopposed slate of Officers and Board members and elect them for service was made by N8RDH, and 2nd by W8TW. Motioned Approved.

The following members were elected as officers for 1 (one) year terms:

KC8EVS-PRESIDENT	**KD8HSA-VICE PRESIDENT**
KC8UR-TREASURER	**N8IBR-SECRETARY**

The following members were elected to the Board of Directors 2 (two) year terms:

KD8FXX N8PPF W8UMH
K8AEC KE8ANS

Motion to adjourn made at 6:12 pm by N8RDH, 2nd by AC8PT. Motion Approved

Following the meeting multiple drawings were held for door prizes donated to the club.
Our Ohio Section Manager, N8SY donated some extra items which were added to the drawings. Thank Scott.
There were 19 members and 19 guest present.
Respectfully submitted;

N8IBR Secretary-MVARC

JUST A REMINDER. IF YOU HAVEN'T PAID THEM ALREADY, IT IS TIME TO PAY YOUR 2016 CLUB MEMBERSHIP DUES.

A Reborn Contester

By Jim Williams, N8IBR

In recent issues of our newsletter, we have had informative articles from members talking about operating contest. I would like to add my comments on the subject.

While many of you know that my main interest in Amateur Radio involves the National Traffic System, you may not know years ago I was an avid contester. With the recently started friendly competition in the club, I find I am regaining my lost love for contesting.

For me the key to operating a contest is to not expect to be top dog. I know that with my 100 watt station I am not going to compete with the stations with high power amplifiers, tall towers, and large Yagi antennas.

I don't own, or desire to own an amplifier. And I am getting too old and too out of shape to climb towers any more. Heck, I get nervous just getting up on my garage roof. I simply try to do the best I can using past experiences, the best antennas I can put up, and good operating procedures. If you have a ½ acre lot, and aren't deed covenant restricted, you should be able to assemble a decent antenna system for any of the bands from 80 Meters through UHF. If you have 1 acre or more, you should be able to add a 160 meter antenna of some nature. If you live on a smaller lot than those mentioned above, don't lose hope. Many contesters operate successfully from smaller lots with verticals and trap dipole antennas. You just have to experiment to see what will works.

The various HF traffic nets I participate in use 20, 40, and 80 meters to cover most of North America. By making adjustments to my stations antenna system to optimize coverage of the USA on the NTS HF nets, I have developed a decent antenna system on those bands that perform well in contests.

Just a note here, operating (or just listening to) any traffic net is a good way to become aware of your stations capabilities, and make adjustments to your antennas and equipment to improve your stations performance for all usages. Be it Rag Chewing, Contesting, or Public Service operations. Additionally, you can pick up good operating practices listening to these nets.

Over the years, I have tried to adopt various operating styles that I have heard good contesters and traffic handlers using. By combining these various styles, I have developed a system that works for me. Again, you just need to experiment to see what works for you. Many of the contesters I have talked to over the years tell me that when operating a multiple band contest, always start with the highest frequency band that is open. This makes sense. You can always move down in frequency as the higher bands close down.

On the 10 and 15 meter bands, I know my present antennas will have trouble competing with the high power and Yagi Antenna stations. So, unless these bands are wide open, I use the "Search and Pounce" method of operating when operating them. On 20, 40, and 80 meters, where my antennas can compete with most stations of equal output power, I try to establish a "Run Frequency", and let the other stations find me. I usually can run a frequency for 60 to 80 contacts an hour using this method.

When "Running a Frequency", if I am able to pick out more than one calling station, I try to work the weaker stations first. The stronger stations will always be there, while you may lose a weaker station due to changing band conditions. I feel this has helped my scores over the years. By combining these two types of operating, I feel I maximize my stations performance, and turn in a competitive score.

Another key for me is to stay aware of band conditions, so I know when to change bands. By this, I mean I need to remain alert to the other stations signal strength, and whether or not my stations signal is going to be heard in crowded band conditions.

Remember, during contest there could be a hundred or more stations calling the same station you are. So, you may just be noise in the other stations receiver.

A Reborn Contester, continued on page 5

A Reborn Contester

continued from page 4

At my station, if received signals are running S-3 or less during a contest, it is time to change bands. Yes I could stay on that band, use up valuable time, and slowly work a few stations. But, with weaker band conditions, the reward for staying on that band during a contest would be low. Remember, in most contest, the goal is to work as many stations as possible in a specific amount of time.

If I am using the "Search and Pounce" method, I don't spend a lot of time trying to work the weaker signal stations. Unless they answer me after a couple calls, I move on.

As you can see, my methods aren't anything new or secret. Again, I have developed my system from observing what some of the successful stations have done. Whether my methods will work for you or not, I don't know. It is just the system that works for me.

Even if you can only put in an hour or so, give contesting a try. You would be surprised how much fun it can be. As there are numerous contests each month, you should be able to find some that appeal to you. Come join us in the fun.

73,

Jim-N8IBR

==========

What would Wayne (Green) Do?

By Dan Romanchik, KB6NU

Wayne Green was a crackpot…but he was a great one. For those of you who aren't as old as I am, Wayne Green, W2NSD, was not only the publisher of 73 Magazine, but also the founder of Byte and other PC magazines in the early days of personal computing. In 73, he would write these long, rambling editorials. Often, he would take the ARRL to task, criticizing what he thought to be some lunk-headed policy or another. Just as often, he'd be encouraging hams to take up some new technology. He was, for example, one of the guys driving hams to set up repeater systems.

He would often exhort hams to get started in their own technology-related business. I remember one column where he urged hams to get involved in the home-security business. And, of course, when personal computers became popular, he wrote that hams should think about getting into that business. His reasoning was that our knowledge of electronics would stand us in good stead in those businesses.

Today, I think that he would be telling us to get more involved in with technologies like the Internet of Things, Wi-Fi, or whatever other wireless technology is coming down the pike. "Wireless" is the key word here. These networking technologies are based on good, old radio, and who better to push these technologies forward than guys like us who understand radio.

This point was brought home to me last week as I was interviewing an executive of a wireless company for an article that I'm writing. He said to me that many of the companies he works with are taking a software-centric view to their wireless products. They simply use the reference designs provided by the wireless chip makers and expect those designs to work flawlessly in their products.

While they often do, he gave me an example where simply using the reference design was a colossal failure. In one case, he said, the company mounted the board inside a metal enclosure. Since the antenna was part of the printed circuit board, the enclosure acted like a shield, and of course, the device had little or no range.

He went on to say that he thought that there was a real shortage of experienced RF guys in the wireless industry. Does that sound like an opportunity to you? It does to me. So, I'm going to make like Wayne Green here and exhort all you guys to get out there and take advantage of it.

What would Wayne (Green) Do?, Continued on page 6

What would Wayne (Green) Do?

continued from page 5

This is not only a business opportunity, but a way for amateur radio operators to fulfill a couple of the "purposes" of amateur radio, as set forth in Part 97.1 of the amateur radio regulations. Part 97.1(b) says that one of the purposes of the Amateur Radio Service is "Continuation and extension of the amateur's proven ability to contribute to the advancement of the radio art." According to Part 97.1(d), another purpose of the Amateur Radio Service is "Expansion of the existing reservoir within the amateur radio service of trained operators, technicians, and electronics experts."

Let's do it!

When he's not ruminating on the latest wireless technologies, KB6NU likes to make use of some vintage wireless technologies by working CW on the HF bands. He's also a prolific blogger (www.kb6nu.com) and the author of the "No Nonsense" amateur radio license study guides (www.kb6nu.com/study-guides). If you have a comment or a question, email him at cwgeek@kb6nu.com.

==========

Contesting for Fun

by Don Russell, W8PEN

There are several types of contest stations.

There are the Big Gun stations that have multiple towers, usually three or more, with single band full sized beams stacked on each tower. Yes, I said three beams on one tower and usually dedicated to one band. These beams are phased together and the operator can choose between one, two, or all three beams at the same time. Why? Different angles of radiation depending on which antennas are selected. Most of the Big Gun towers are a minimum of a hundred feet high. Their wire antennas for 160, 80, and 40 meters are strung between these towers. Oh, they also have phased vertical antennas that give them gain in any direction on 160, 80, and 40 meters. Their kilowatt amplifiers run cool as they pile up the contacts hearing stations leaving the rest of us wonder if they are faking it. These guys spend tens of thousands of dollars building their "Super Contest Station". I would guess they get as much fun out of building their "Super Contest Station" as they do from operating it. In fact many owners of these fantastic stations invite guest operators for the major contests. I should be so lucky.

These stations that are in a class by themselves compete with other stations of equal or better ability and are actually in a class by themselves by contest rules. The operators are first rate. I could listen to some of these skilled operators for hours if I was not busy trying to build up my contact total as well.

Then there is the rest of us. We are referred to as Little Pistols. Some of us have one or two towers typically sixty feet tall or so. Some little pistols use tri-band beams and maybe run a kilowatt. Most run100 watts. Low hanging dipoles and loops, or maybe a single vertical are our main antenna for 160, 80, and 40 meters. I myself have been limited to a single 160 meter windom antenna for the past five or ten years. I have not really been into contesting for a while.

Then there are the QRP'rs. The group that runs 5 watts or less during a contest. Some have spent lots of money on towers and antennas. Some, just like us little pistols use wires only for antennas. You got to wonder about these skilled QRP'rs. Many of them outscore most of us little pistol low power stations. Good grief Charlie Brown.

My point? There are different classes of stations built into the contest rules for a reason. To level the playing field so that us little pistols can compete with similarly equipped stations. Rest assured, there are many very good little pistol operators that can give the big guns a run for their money. Don't be afraid to try contesting. Most of us little pistols are simply out to better our score from the previous year.

contesting for fun, continued on Page 7

continued from Page 6

Recent contests have shown the weakness of relying on wire type antennas, especially for 20, 15, and 10 meters. The competition on 20 meters is almost overwhelming. Looking back over my past contest results show that I average under 100 contacts of 20 meters each contest, domestic or DX. I generally make 50 or so contacts on 15 meters and anywhere between 5 and 100 on 10 meters depending on whether the band is open. Then I look at other stations in my class (Low power, single op) and I see that they average way over 200 contacts on 20 meters and 100 or so on 15 and 10 meters. What gives? How can one improve their effectiveness on these three bands.

If you ask a serious contester what he does to improve his effectiveness, the number one answer would be to improve his/her antenna system. Better antennas do more then let your signal get out better. It lets you hear better also.

A big tri-bander would be nice, but I had one of those for years and it did not really improve my score that much. I think I will stick with wires. So what to do? That depends on the contest.

I believe simple dipoles for 20, 15, and 10 meters up 40 or 50 feet or more is as effective as a small tri-band antenna for domestic contesting. Meaning contests where the object is to work as many stations as possible in the US and Canada. When I did have a beam, I worked a lot of stations off the back of the beam. That would be 10 to 15 db weaker than a dipole. So why not put up a high dipole and work both directions? For newbie's, a dipole radiates broadside to the wire in a figure 8 pattern and has nulls off the ends. The problem I see with this is getting a dipole up that high to begin with. Unless you have a tower, you are out of luck. Several years ago, I built a fan dipole for 20, 15, and 10 meters.

This fan dipole was tapped to two bamboo cane fishing poles and weigh less than two pounds. I put it at the top of the tower and was able to rotate it. It was one of the best antennas I have ever had for those bands and I was able to work 150 stations on 20 meters during several contests. A big improvement! So, number one improvement for 20, 15, and 10 meters (other than a tower with a beam) would be high, high, high dipoles.

Another possibility for us wire guys would be a “V” beam antenna. A “V” beam antenna is simply two wires a wavelength long or longer at the lowest operating frequency formed into a horizontal “V” with an angle of 70 to 90 degrees. A one wavelength 20 meter “V” beam would have good gain on 20, 15, and 10 meters. The down side: A “V” beam is only good in two directions, front and back with a very narrow pattern. If you want to cover every direction, you would need several wires and some relays to control them. I put up a “V” beam antenna for the 10 meter contest and it was not very high. Apex was 15 feet and it drooped down to about 6 feet on the ends and the antenna performed well. Made well over half of my contacts with this antenna and all the contacts were with stations on or near the West Coast (California, Arizona, Washington). Band conditions were horrible, but this antenna got me out. If I could get it up to 40 feet or so, I think it would be a great antenna for 20, 15, and 10 meters.

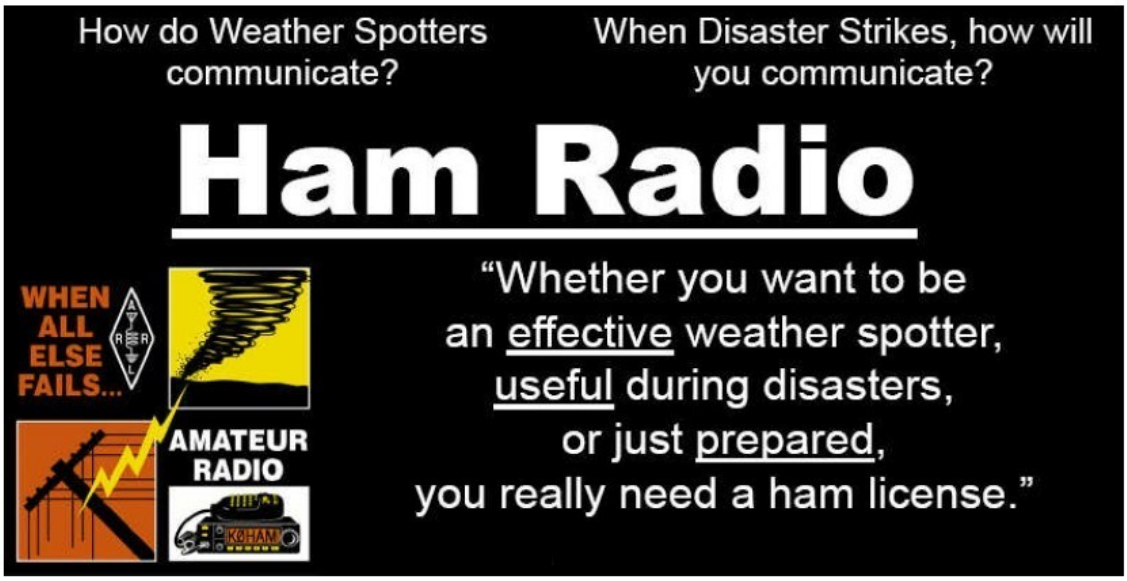
What about antennas for the DX contests? I did very poorly in the CQ World Wide Contest a few weeks ago. CW was not really that much better, so I have been thinking about antennas that should make working DX a bit easier.

I was reading that a simple quarter wave vertical with 30 or more radials is a nice DX antenna and even built one to try out. It worked reasonably well on 20 meters and even helped me work a few DX station during the November Sweepstakes. However, I ran across a better antenna. We all know J-Poles are effective antennas for 2 meters and 70 Cm. Did you know that you can also make an HF J-Pole? On HF, the J-Pole, being a half wave antenna, has a lower angle of radiation than a quarter wave vertical does. Thus, it should be better for DX.

See my article on the HF J-Pole antenna in next months Newsletter.

This wraps up another “Contesting for Fun” column. If anyone would like to “guest author” an article for this column, just let me know. See you at the meeting. Don, W8PEN

Editors Note: http://www.arrl.org/contest-calendar has all details and information of current and future contests next year



HAM RADIO CLASSES NOW FORMING

Upon passing this course, you will be able to talk to local hams and at times Amateur Radio Operators around the world using voice, digital, and Morse Code. Morse Code is not required to earn your license.

Date: Begins Thursday, January 14, 2016 and will be held every Thursday Through February 25, 2016 from 7:00 PM to 9:00 PM. Exams will be held Saturday, February 27, 2016 at 9:00 AM. Pre-Register and Walk-ins welcome.

Location: Classes will be held at the Knox County Chapter of the American Red Cross, 300 North Mulberry Street, Mt. Vernon, Ohio. We will be using the Training Center which is in back of the main building.

There will be a Registration / Sign up Day on Saturday, Jan 9, 2016 at the American Red Cross Training Center from 1:00PM to 4:00PM. There will be an actual station "on the air" plus demonstrations of Morse Code and digital communications. Come on in, sign up for class, and take home your study guide.

Cost: This course is sponsored by the Mt. Vernon Amateur Radio Club. The course and course material are provided free of charge. Those passing the exam will receive a free one year club membership.

Exam: There is a $15.00 Fee for taking the exam. This fee goes to the testing organization and the club does not retain any testing fees.

For more information about Ham Radio, please visit our website at www.mvarc.net or check our National Organization, the American Radio Relay League at www.arrl.org.

Contact:Don Russell, W8PEN: w8pen@arrl.net 740-397-0249, 740-326-0476
Mike McCardel, KC8YLD: kc8yld@arrl.net, 740-599-6614
Frank Counts, KC8YLD: fcounts@gmail.com 740-393-3002

Membership Form

Club dues run from January 1 until December 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 years of age, and for those living outside Knox County

Mount Vernon Amateur Radio Club
PO Box 372
Mount Vernon, OH 43050

Name_____Call-Sign_____

Street_____

City_____State_____Zip Code_____

Phone Number_____License Class_____

ARRL Member (Yes/No)_____ E-Mail Address_____

Members are entitled to a free MVARC E-Mail address. Would you like one?

Yes_____ No_____ If yes, please enter password_____

Other Comments:_____

The Mount Vernon Amateur Club Newsletter CQ, is published monthly by the Mount Vernon Amateur Radio Club. Editor: Bill Bradley, KC8BB

President:	Frank Counts, KC8EVS
Vice President:	Tom Evans, KD8HSA
Secretary:	Jim William, N8IBR
Treasurer:	Tony Spiegel, KC8UR
Call/Repeater Trustee:	Don Russell, W8PEN
Equipment Trustee:	Barry Butts, N8PPF
Directors:	Emery Bennett, W8TW Barry Butts, N8PPF Don Blizzard, W8UMH Jeff Butz, N8SMT John Barr, KD8FXX Scott Fields, K8AEC

January 2016

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Refer to Contest address below for details on all Contests					*1* **Happy New Year !!!** **Straight Key Night**	*2* **RTTY Roundup** **Kids Day**
3 9:00 pm ARES Sunday Night Net on K8EEN **KC8BB –Bill**	*4*	*5*	*6* 5:00 pm Dinner at Southside Diner	*7*	*8* 10:00 am Breakfast at Hardee's	*9* 9:00 am Breakfast at Allison's Finer Diner 1:00 pm Ham Radio Class Registration & Sign up Day
10 9:00 pm ARES Sunday Night Net on K8EEN **KD8WSI –John**	*11* **7:00 PM** **MVARC meeting at the Knox County Red Cross Building**	*12*	*13* 5:00 pm Dinner at Southside Diner	*14* 7:00-9:00pm Ham Radio Class at Red Cross Bldg.	*15* 10:00 am Breakfast at Hardee's	*16*
17 9:00 pm ARES Sunday Night Net on K8EEN **AC8FV –Mark**	*18*	*19*	*20* 5:00 pm Dinner at Southside Diner	*21* 7:00-9:00pm Ham Radio Class at Red Cross Bldg.	*22* 10:00 am Breakfast at Hardee's	*23*
24 9:00 pm ARES Sunday Night Net on K8EEN **KD8HSA –Tom**	*25* MLK Jr. Day	*26*	*27* 5:00 pm Dinner at Southside Diner	*28* 7:00-9:00 pm Ham Radio Class at Red Cross Bldg.	*29* 10:00 am Breakfast at Hardee's	*30*
31 9:00 pm ARES Sunday Night Net on K8EEN **KC8BB –Bill**	***February 1***	*2*	*3* 5:00 pm Dinner at Southside Diner	*4* 7:00-9:00 pm Ham Radio Class at Red Cross Bldg.	*5* 10:00 am Breakfast at Hardee's	*6*