Ham Radio Rocks!

The Mt. Vernon Amateur Radio Club

June, 2012 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

June Meeting to be at The Knox County Red Cross

Please note that the next meeting of the Mt. Vernon Amateur Radio Club will be at our regular meeting site, 300 North Mulberry Street, Mt. Vernon, Ohio.

Field Day will be the main topic of the meeting. If you are planning on using your laptop computer or Netbook computer for logging, you will need to install the Field Day logging software and check it out.

The wireless router will be up and running during the meeting so we can all check our connections before Field Day weekend.

What is Field Day?

Field Day is an annual Amateur Radio exercise encouraging Emergency Communications preparedness among Amateur Radio Operators. In the United States, it is typically the largest single emergency preparedness exercise in the country, with over 30,000 operators participating each year.

Since the first ARRL Field Day in 1933, radio amateurs throughout North America have practiced the rapid deployment of radio communications equipment in environments ranging from operations under tents in remote areas to operations inside Emergency Operations Centers (EOCs). Operations

The next meeting of the Mt. Vernon Amateur Radio Club will be Monday, June 11, 2012 at 7:00 P.M. in the Red Cross Annex Building, 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.

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 Saturday, June 9, 2012 at 9:00 AM at Allison's Finer Diner, 11587 Upper Gilchrist Road,* Mt. Vernon, Ohio***

using emergency and alternative power sources are highly encouraged, since electricity and other public infrastructures are often among the first to fail during a nation disaster or severe weather.

To determine the effectiveness of the exercise and of each participant's operations, there is an integrated contesting component, and many clubs also engage in concurrent leisure activities (camping out, cookouts, etc.). Operations typically last a continuous twenty-four hours, requiring scheduled relief operators to keep stations on the air. Additional contest points are awarded for experimenting with unusual modes, making contacts via satellite, and involving youth in the activity.

The above was taken from:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Field_Day_(amateur_radio)

This year, Field Day will begin at 2:00PM Saturday, June 23, 2012 and end at 2:00PM, June 24, 2012.

Locally, activities will begin Friday, June 22, 2012 at 2:00PM. This is the earliest that the Club is allowed to start setting up antennas.

There will be lots of work to do, so please free up your schedule to help set up antennas. There is plenty of space and you may bring your tent or camper is desired. Some hams will stay all night Friday to keep an eye on things and do some pre Field Day operating. Many will stay Saturday night and operate Field Day all day long.

Our Club Field Day is a family event, so bring your kids, friends, or anyone who may wish to check out the operations. There will be a pot luck Picnic Saturday, June 23rd starting around 4:00Pm. The club will supply meat (Brats and Hamburgers and perhaps much more) and drinks. There will be a "Presidential Breakfast" Sunday morning hosted by Club president Arlin Bradford, KD8EVR. You don't want to miss that.

New hams young and old are encouraged to join us at this event. If you just got your licensed, be it through the Mt. Vernon Amateur Radio club or not, please join us and see what Ham Radio on the Shortwave bands are all about. This is not 2 meter FM!

The Mt. Vernon Amateur Radio Club

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Members are encouraged to send articles pertaining to Amateur Radio, with an emphasis on local activity, equipment reviews, and personal experiences to the Newsletter Editor. Articles are due on the Sunday before the first Monday of the month.

Newsletter Editor: Don Russell, W8PEN
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Directions to Field Day Floral Valley Community Center on Crestrose Drive

By Mike McCardel, KC8YLD

1. Take US 36 to the Apple Valley entrance (**Apple Valley BLVD - County Road 4A**). Stay left onto Apple Valley Drive. Follow Apple Valley Drive to Crestrose Dr. Turn Left on Crestrose Drive. Community Center is on the left

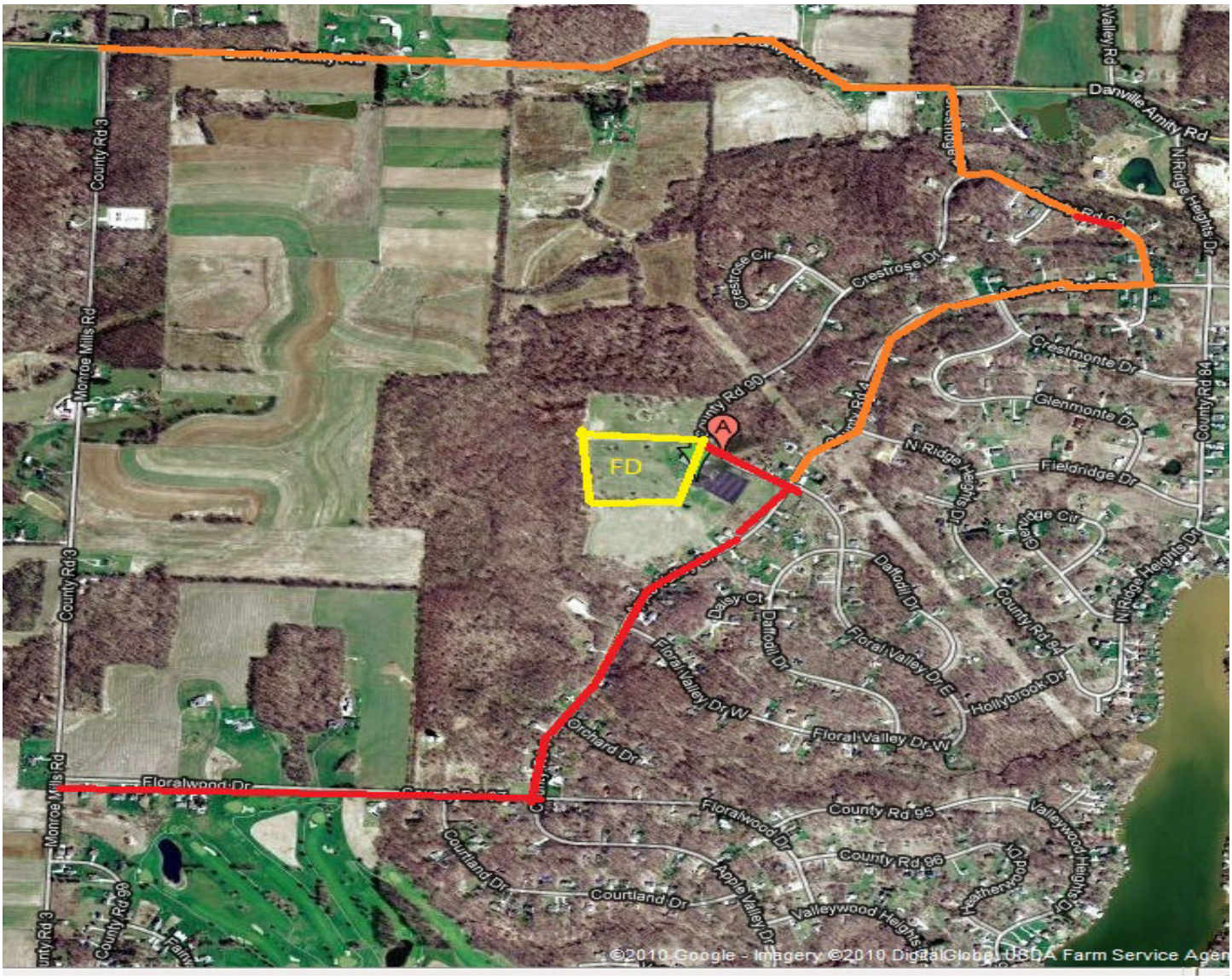
If you don't like the winding roads through the Apple Valley labyrinth try one of these alternatives

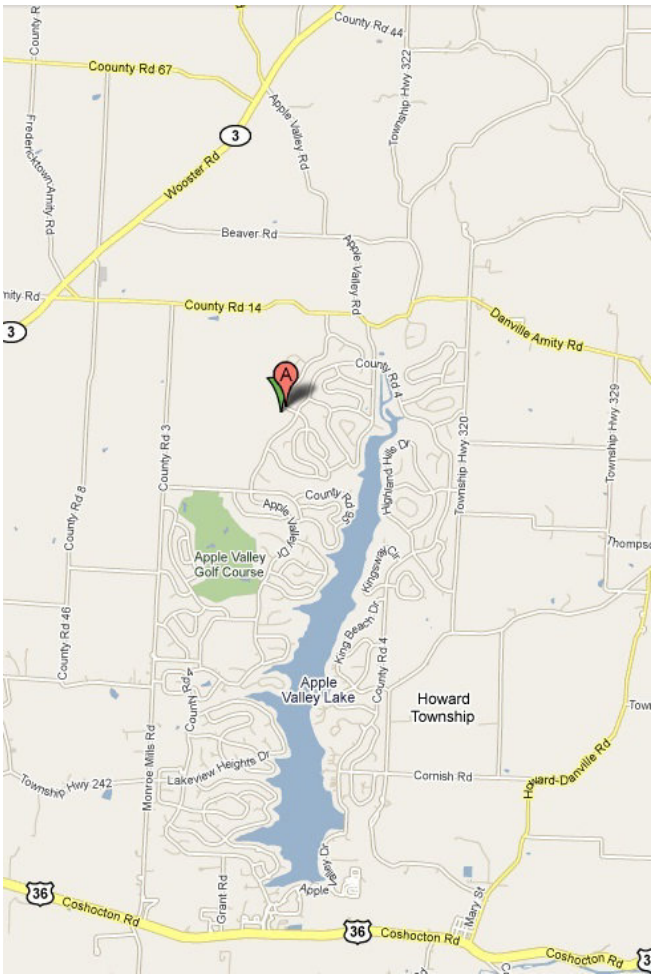
2. Right now Monroe Mills is closed at US 36
Take US 36 East to Gilchrist Road - County Rd 8. Following Gilchrist there is a sharp left at Vincent Rd. After turning left to stay on Gilchrist turn at next right, Harding - TwpRd 245. Turn left on Monroe Mills - County Rd 3. Turn Right onto Floralwood Dr - County Rd 97 Then. Turn left onto Apple Valley Drive - County Rd 4 Crestrose Dr will be first road to the left

3. ┌ Take SR 3 to Amity
Turn Right (East) onto Danville-Amity Road - County Road 14. Turn Right onto County Road 84 Ridge Heights (aka Apple Valley). Turn right onto Apple Valley Drive - County Road4. Follow Apple Valley Drive to 2nd Crestrose Drive. (Note: the first road you pass is one end of Crestrose Drive, it will get you there but winds a good bit) See maps.

GPS Coordinates are:

40 degrees 27.531' N (40.45885 Degrees N)
82 degrees 21.053' W (82.35083 Degrees W)





Field Day Generator Tips

Only highly trained and experienced personnel should be assigned to setting up and maintaining your FD Generator. These skilled individuals must be dependable, properly equipped, and alert at all times to the status of the equipment powering your Field Day site.

As you can see from the picture it is important to be prepared for any situation that might jeopardize your Field Day.

1. Be certain to have sufficient fuel for the entire event. These "gentlemen" have 2 jugs/containers of fresh "fuel".
2. Be ready for any emergency. Fire during refueling can be disastrous. Keep your fire extinguisher/bucket close at hand as shown above.
3. Proper clothing is a must for this task. The crew member on the right is prepared for any situation. He is dressed in the very latest fire protection clothing as noted by his *thermal* underwear.
4. Stray electrical current can be quickly detected by the trained specialist using only his bare feet.
5. And don't forget to bring your FVT, fuel volatility tester, to the site with you. Did you spot the one in the picture?

For a more comprehensive discussion on FD generator preparation see:

http://w4ft.com/2010/05/field-day-is-your-generator-ready/

Generator Attendants

TECHNICAL TIDBITS

Tricks, Tips, and Slips
by Barry Butz N8PPF

One Windows feature I have found to be very useful is the hibernate function. When shutting down the computer, the memory contents are copied to the hard drive before the power is turned off. When restarting, the stored memory contents are returned to their original locations and the computer is ready to go. This isn't the same as standby because it doesn't use any power in the shutdown state. The advantage is about an 80% improvement in shutdown and startup speed. In one case, startup time is about half a minute, compared to four minutes.

For two or three years I have owned an Asus netbook computer. Although not very powerful, it is very handy to carry. I have used it for traveling and at Field Day for logging. Often you read articles saying that more memory can boost performance. The Asus came with 1-gig but can support 2-gigs. I thought for about $26 I'd give the additional memory a try. Before changing out the memory I timed loading times for more and more programs, trying to use up the memory. Then I installed the 2-gig ram and repeated the process in the same order. The results were non-spectacular. Some programs ran a little faster, some a little slower. Oh well, it wasn't a fortune wasted.

A little later I noticed that hibernation wasn't working properly - it locked up the computer during shutdown. At first I blamed a recent Windows update. I've seen similar things before. After three months of enduring agonizing startup times, I finally realized that this problem involves memory, and I had messed with the memory! Next step: put the original 1-gig back in - problem gone! Anybody need a 2-gig memory module?

Treasurer's Report

Jun 1, 2012
for May 1 to May 31, 2012

Balance on 5-1-12:	$	2934.67
Income:		
Dues:	$	12.00
50-50:	$	9.00
Interest:	$	.02
Donations:	$	125.00
Expenses:		
Equipment insurance	$	72.00
Balance on 5-31-12:	$	3008.69
Designated Funds:		
Year 2005 Repeater Fund:	$	522.39
Field Day Fund:	$	222.11
Communication Vehicle Fund:	$	471.04

Barry Butz N8PPF

Dayton Hamvention 2012: Another great ham radio experience

By Dan Romanchik, KB6NU

My Dayton experience started at 3:45 am Thursday morning. That's when I had to get up so that I could make it to the Fairborn Holiday Inn in time for the first session of this year's Four Days in May (FDIM) conference. FDIM is a one-day conference put on by the QRP Amateur Radio Club International (http://qrparci.org/) and is a great way to start the "Dayton experience."

This year, we were treated to six very fine presentations. They included talks on using microcontrollers for various projects, software-defined radio, VHF and UHF for QRPers, homebrewing with "hollow state" devices (more commonly known as tubes), using open-source electronic design tools, and operating pedestrian mobile. The two talks that I enjoyed the most were "Hollow State (Thermatron) Homebrewing" by Grayson, TA2ZGE/KJ7UM and "Leveraging Free and Open Source Tools in Homebrewing" by Jason, NT7S.

Friday morning, I got up early again, so that I could make the 7:30am bus to the Hamvention. We arrived about 8:00 am, just as the gates were opening. The first thing that I did was to head to the FAR Circuits tent, which is–as the name implies–at the far end of the flea market. There, I made my first purchases, a board to make a regenerative receiver and one to make an audio breakout box.

The rest of the day was a combination of wandering the aisles of the outdoor flea market, fighting the crowds inside the arena, attending seminars, and meeting people that I know. By the time, 4:30 pm rolled around, I was pretty hot and

tired. Temperatures topped 80 degrees, and on the blacktop surface of the flea market, temperatures were undoubtedly higher. I was happy to get on the bus and head back to the hotel.

Saturday, was pretty much the same story, except it was even hotter. The temperature almost hit 90 degrees. I didn't bring any sunscreen, either, so I got a little rosy.

I ran into some people that I knew that had just come down for the day, or perhaps that I'd missed the day before. One guy I ran into at the Ohio Repeater Council booth, pulled out his new Elecraft KX-3 and gave me a quick demo. It's actually quite a cool, little radio. I'm still saving up for a K-3, though.

Around noon, I went to the food court for a slice of pizza and a glass of beer. Seating is catch as catch can, so I shared a table with several other hams. This is great because you get to meet all kinds of different people.

This year, an older gentleman sat down next to me with his beer. We got to chatting, and as it turned out, this was his 55th straight year attending the Dayton Hamvention! He started going before it was even held at Hara Arena, and even after they moved to Hara, they didn't use the entire facility as they do now. I'm really glad that I got to speak with him.

So, what did you buy?

I didn't really go down to Dayton with much of a shopping list. In addition to the PC boards, I did pick up a bunch of other little stuff including some strain reliefs, more clamp-on ferrite cores, a paddle pad from Vibroplex ($1) to keep the paddle down at the club station from sliding around, and some tube sockets! One of the vendors there had a box of tube sockets that they were selling for a quarter apiece or five for a dollar. I picked out five and paid the lady, and as I was walking away, I decided that they were such a good deal that I went back and bought five more.

My biggest purchase was NT7S's OpenBeacon QRSS transmitter (www.etherkit.com). It cost me $40. It looks like a very nice kit, and I'm hoping to be on 30m QRSS shortly with it. The nice thing about this transmitter is that it has a microcontroller that lets it transmit DFCW and Hellschreiber, in addition to CW. It should be fun to both build and operate.

Too rich for my blood

In other news, both Kenwood and FlexRadio both introduced new radios at Dayton. Perhaps the most buzz was around the Kenwood TS-990. All they were showing was a prototype under a Plexiglass cover. In addition to being incredibly expensive, the radio is huge! I heard someone joke that to produce this radio, Kenwood is going to have to corner the market on buttons and knobs. If you've seen the photo in QST (which was allegedly produced with Photoshop), you'll know what I mean.

The other radio with a bit of buzz is the new FlexRadio FLEX-6000. For the past couple of weeks, the FlexRadio website was proclaiming that this radio was going to be a game changer. Perhaps it is, but at $6,000+, this radio is out of my league, and too expensive for the majority of radio amateurs. That being the case, I really don't know what all the buzz is about.

I'm sure that the TS-990 and the FLEX-6000 are both great radios, but I think that the law of diminishing returns applies here. At some point, are you really getting $6,000 or $12,000 of fun out of the radio? I don't think that I would.

Well, that's it. Another Dayton Hamvention is in the bag. It was a lot of fun, and I'm already looking forward to next year. I've already contacted one of the forum organizers about adding an adult education forum. I think that's something that's both needed and would be popular. I'll just have to make sure to leave enough time to hit the flea market and grab some more tube sockets or coax or whatever.

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When he's not tromping around flea markets, or attending conferences, Dan, KB6NU, writes books about ham radio. His latest, 21 Things to Do After You Get Your Amateur Radio License, is available as an e-book from Amazon, Barnes&Noble, or from his website, http://www.kb6nu.com/. You can e-mail him with comments, questions, compliments, or brickbats at cwgeek@kb6nu.com.

Field Day 2012

By Don Russell, W8PEN

AC8FV and guest

Are you ready for Field Day? Well, it is almost here! This year we will continue entering the competition in the 4A transmitter class. We will be operating four transmitters simultaneously throughout the event. There will also be one VHF/UHF station available giving us a total of five stations to work with. According to Field Day rules, one VHF/UHF station can be used without adding to our transmitter class

Not sure what Mike McCardel KC8YLD has in mind but last year he had a satellite station set up. This would give us additional bonus points, however, we will have to make sure that we shut down one of the main stations while doing satellite work. The satellite station does not count as a free station like the VHF station does.

Of course, Doc AA8WP, is planning a huge eat feast so come Hungry! Don't forget the Presidential Breakfast, which will be sometime Sunday morning during Field Day. As usual, we will finish off any left over Field Day food at the July or August meeting!

Want to check out the Field Day rules before Field Day starts? See this web page:

http://www.arrl.org/files/file/Field-Day/2012/2012-FD-Rules.pdf

If interested, one may also download the complete Field Day packet here:

http://www.arrl.org/files/file/Field-Day/2012/2012-FD-Packet-V2.pdf

Here is a rundown of the anticipated Field Day station set up. Nothing here is etched in stone. Things will change as the need requires. We will stay flexible.

4- stations: 4A (4 Alpha)

Station 1

Main Bands: 75 SSB
Capable of: 80 - 10 SSB

Antenna: 80 meter Windom antenna up as high as possible. Alternative antenna will be the 80/40 meter dipole we have used in the past, which would limit the station to 80 and 40 meters but would not require an antenna tuner.

We will need a radio for this station. Usually we have more rigs available than we use, so I will leave this open.

Station 2

Main Band: 40 SSB
Capable of: 40 - 10 SSB

Antenna: 40 meter windom up as high as possible.

Rig Supplied by Ruben Clark KB2SAI.

40 SSB has been a very good band for us almost every Field Day.

Station 3

Main Band: 20 SSB
Capable of 20 - 10 SSB.

Antenna: 3 element beam or 20 meter Extended Zepp (3 DB gain). Arlin Bradford KD8EVR is planning a 100 foot tower for this station.

Rig supplied by Arlin Bradford KD8EVR.

Antennas supplied by KD8EVR and W8PEN.

The 20 meter Extended Zepp antenna did a very nice job for us last year. I am wondering if a 20 meter beam up 100 feet might skip over the large population East and North East of us. I guess we can always lower the antenna a bit if need be. It will be an interesting experiment if all goes as planned.

Station 4

Main Bands:160 - 10 CW

Antenna: 160 meter windom.

Antennas supplied by Jeff Butz N8SMT

Rig supplied by W8OIO

We will want to get this antenna up as high as possible. I am looking forward to a very good CW station.

Logger

Field Day Network Logger by N3FJP

Wireless network provided by KB2SAI.

Database computer provided by KD8EVR

Needs tested before FD!

Point 1

All stations can work any band that there is an antenna available for. That is the beauty of the N3FJP Network FD logger. One should ask before operating a band just to make sure no other station is using that band/mode. Even though the logger will warn that a station is already using a particular band and mode, I have seen this warning ignored (or not understood) a few times. Please double check before using a station on a band other than its designated band. More than one station on the same band/mode is against FD rules.

It may be a good idea to verbally ask if anyone is using a certain band before you start operating. Remember, we can only have four transmitters transmitting at any one time.

Point 2

All stations on battery power. Or we can use the quite generators from KD8EVR and N8PPF. I stress the word "quite"!

The last four years has seen our Field Days run mostly from battery power. We can always use extra batteries. Please make sure the battery you are offering for use is fully charged before Field Day **and is of the Deep Cycle battery type**. An ordinary car battery will not last long as a station battery and if could be damaged if discharged to the extreme. Deep cycle batteries are designed for this type of current drain and typically will last most of the Field Day period. I would like to see two batteries per station. One would be the backup in case the other battery goes dead before the end of Field Day. May be a good idea to switch batteries half way through Field Day just to keep things going and power levels up there. If needed, batteries can be charged by solar panels or the generators.

Point 3

Field day will only be as successful as club members make it. This is by far our biggest event of the year and we will need a lot of bodies, equipment, and expertise to pull off another great Field Day.

Please reserve Field Day weekend for joining us. Field Day is always the fourth weekend in June. This year it is June 23 - 24. Field Day operations start at 1800 UTC Saturday (2 PM local time) and will continue to 1800 UTC Sunday (2 PM).

On Friday, June 22, we will be begin setting up antennas at 1800 UTC (2 PM). This is the earliest we can start setting up per Field Day rules. Typically, we work until dark.

Please join us for this fantastic event.

MVARC

Mt. Vernon Amateur Radio Club
Minutes for the May 14, 2012 Meeting.

By Jeff Butz, N8SMT

Attendees:

1.	Larry Helzer DVM	AA8WP
2.	Dan Crowthers	KB8TEX
3.	Tony Spiegel	KC8UR
4.	Matt Rausenberg	KD8OEG
5.	Barry Butz	N8PPF
6.	Emery Bennett	W8TW
7.	Don Russell	W8PEN
8.	Chuck Payne	KD8RZR
9.	Deroy Howard	AA5R
10.	Brian Rernicken	KD8RZT
11.	Frank Counts	KC8EVS
12.	Mark Bisenius	AC8FV
13.	Don Blizzard	W8UMH
14.	Carl Payne	AC8LQ
15.	Tom Evans	KD8HSA
16.	David Byrd	KD8RST
17.	Jim Jennessee	KD8UT

18. Matt Ware KD8PSK
19. Arlin Bradford KD8EVR
20. Jeff Butz N8SMT

President Bradford opened the meeting at 7:10 P.M.

Treasurers Report: Barry Butz, N8PPF
Report for February, March and April.

Dues	$ 46.00
50/50	$ 45.00
Interest	$ 2.05
Expense	$ 0.00
Balance	$ 2934.67
Up Coming Expense, Insurance	$ 72.00

Tech Class Exam Report: Don Russell, W8PEN
The Class is completed and everyone passed the test. The next class will be in January.

Field Day: Larry (Doc) Helzer, AA8WP
Doc referred everyone to the ARRL website to familiarize themselves with the rules. Because of an anonymous donation the cost of the food is covered. Antenna setup is scheduled for Friday afternoon at 2:00 P.M.

Old Business:
Tony Spiegel announced that he had one of the Club's Radios an old 1983 vintage Kenwood TS-820. If anyone wants to use it that is fine with him because he isn't using it. Barry Butz said that when Tony got around to it he should turn the radio over to him because he is the keeper of the Club's equipment. Tony said he would.

Emery Bennett made a motion to form a committee to look into alternate meeting locations. The Motion was seconded by Jim Jennessee. Jim Jennessee, Mark Bisenius, Tom Evans, Barry Butz and Emery Bennett volunteered to be on the committee. The Motion was passed by voice vote

New Business:
Everyone who is going to bring a laptop to Field Day should bring it to next month's meeting so we can set them up to network together. Hopefully Ruben Clark will be bring his server to the meeting.
The Tour de Cure will be June 9th. Anyone who is going to help check in to the net on our repeater before 7:30 A.M. and you will be told were to set up. Please e-mail Arlin if you are going to volunteer to help.

Jim Jennessee made a motion to close the meeting. The Motion was seconded by Barry Butz and passed by voice vote.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:07 P.M.

NVIS for ARES®

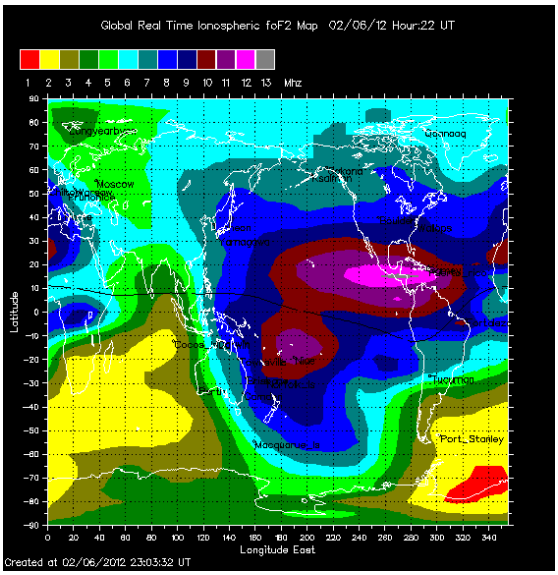
By Mark Bisenius, AC8FV

We rely on VHF & UHF frequencies for EmComm communications, as do most public safety agencies.

And we all count on our repeaters for local coverage in an emergency.

But what happens if our repeaters go down? Or run out of backup power?

We can use NVIS (Near Vertical Incidence Skywave), to communicate on HF inside the typical 300-mile radius "skip zone" of a long-distance HF dipole. Perfect for local or regional emergency communications.



Critical Frequency Map

On the Critical Frequency Map for June 2, 2012 at 7PM EDT, most of the Lower 48 was blue (8 MHz) or dark blue (9 MHz), with southern Texas and southern Florida red (10 MHz).

At just below the Critical Frequency (f_0F2), a signal will punch through any D-layer absorption, and be refracted back to the Earth by the F_2 layer of the ionosphere.

Above the Critical Frequency, a signal's energy will penetrate through the F_2 layer, and not be refracted back to Earth. Too far below the Critical Frequency, and a signal will be completely absorbed by the D-layer.

Critical Frequency usually ranges between 10 MHz during the day, and 4 MHz at night when the D-layer disappears. So NVIS is usually done on 40 meters during the day, when D-layer

absorption attenuates the lower HF frequencies, and 80 meters at night, when the D-layer disappears.

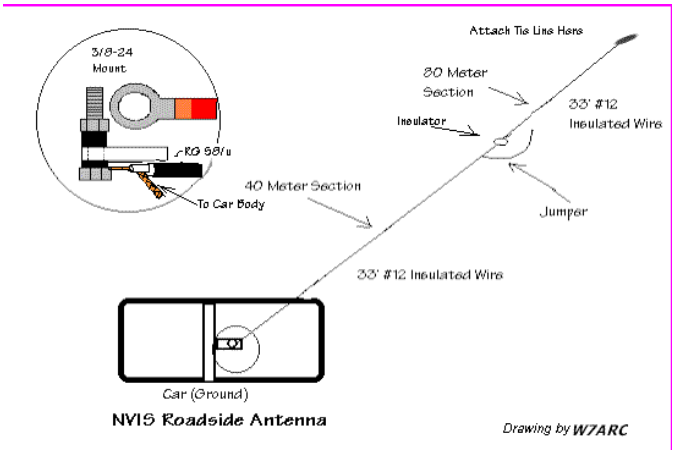
A NVIS antenna is a horizontally-polarized dipole, lower than .1 to .25 wavelength above the ground, causing it to radiate at a high takeoff angle and create a lobe pattern that is strongest 75° to 90° overhead.

Stealth Telecom Super SkyRider mobile NVIS

So the F_2 layer acts as an HF "repeater" 200 miles up, blanketing the earth with an omni-directional signal for about a 300-mile radius with no drop-outs, even in the most rugged terrain.

Ideal for fighting a mountain wildfire, where repeater coverage is spotty even before the mountaintop repeater gets consumed.

Transmit from a deep valley in Afghanistan, and be received in a canyon on the other side of two 14,000-foot mountain ranges? No problem. As long as both stations are using a NVIS antenna.



K6SOJ's Roadside NVIS

K6SOJ's homebrew Roadside NVIS uses a metal vehicle as the "counterpoise" side of a 1/4-wave "dipole" for 40 meters, by electrically grounding a 33-foot #12 wire to the vehicle's chassis through the roof rack, mirror mount, even as low as a bumper or trailer hitch, and then tying the other end to a tree or fence post at a level height.

Low enough for a painful RF burn!

Adding on an additional 33-foot wire after an insulator, which can be bypassed with an alligator clip jumper, gives you a 66-foot 1/4-wave "dipole" for 80 meters.

Once you check the SWR and test for 50Ω impedance, you should be able to operate without an antenna tuner.

A mobile 100W HF rig such as the Yeasu 857D is plenty of power, since you're just going perpendicular through the D-layer twice. About 200 miles up to the F_2 layer. And 200 miles back down.

Date Change for Columbus Hamfest / ARRL Ohio State Convention

Due to a scheduling conflict of the Aladdin Shrine Center facility, the Columbus Hamfest, and the ARRL Ohio State Convention must be moved to a new date of Saturday, August 11, 2012. The start time of 8:00am remainsthe same, as well as the event location of 3850 Stelzer Road in Columbus.

This change was discovered too late to be caught before publication of he July 2012 QST Magazine. However, the ARRL website, as well as the Ohio Section website (www.arrlohio.org) do show the correct date of August 11, 2012.

ARRL President Kay Craigie, N3KN has revised her schedule, and will still be able to attend the Convention on August 11.

We apologize for any inconvenience this date revision may have caused.

NOTE: The Section is still looking for any speakers who may wish to present at the Convention. Please contact Scott Yonally, N8SY (e-mail:n8sy@arrl.net) if interested.