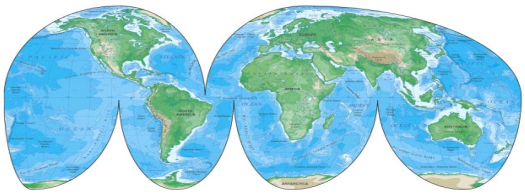
MOUNT VERNON AMATEUR RADIO CLUB

C  Q

March 2006 Newsletter

MEETINGS SECOND MONDAY OF THE MONTH AT THE RED CROSS ANNEX BUILDING,
300 N MULBERRY ST, MT. VERNON, OHIO
REPEATER FREQUENCIES: 146.790 (-) K8EEN /R 444.750 (+) KC8YED /R 53.790 (-) WA8YRS/R
SUNDAY NIGHT ARES NET AT 8:00 P.M ON THE K8EEN REPEATER OPEN TO ALL

FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome to the March 2006 edition of our Newsletter. This time around, we are going back in time a bit. My first article in a series about the equipment I have used in my ham career. For starters, I show off a Knight Kit Span Master receiver that was the very first receiver that I ever used on the ham bands. Also in store for readers is the start of a series on the history of our 2-meter repeater. Mike, KC8YLD has tons of information for us. Hope you enjoy.

Here are a few more web sites that may interest readers:

http://www.norcalqrp.org/sywtbab.htm

http://www.batteryuniversity.com/index.htm

http://www.electronics-radio.com/

http://www.k1ttt.net/technote/coaxloss.html#tables

http://www.messaggeri.it/xradioamatori.htm

http://www.k4tdo.net/tools.htm

Do you have any interesting web sites? Please let me know and I will pass them along.

Not sure where Mike, KC8YLD, got this, but here is a little humor from an unknown author:

A reward of 500 Microfarads is offered for information leading to the arrest of Hop-A-Long Capacity. This un-rectified criminal escaped from a western primary cell where he had been clamped in ions awaiting the gauss chamber.

He is charged with the induction of an 18 turn coil named Milly Henry who was found choked and robbed of valuable joules. He is armed with a carbon rod and is a potential killer. Capacity is also charged with driving D.C. Motor over the Wheatstone Bridge and refusing to let the band pass.

If encountered, he may offer series of resistance. The Electromotive Force spent the night searching for him in a magnetic field, where he had gone to earth.

They had no success and believed he had returned ohm via a short circuit. He was last seen riding a kilocycle with his friend Eddy Current who was playing a harmonic.

A HISTORY OF THE MT. VERNON REPEATER PART I
By Don Russell, WA8YRS

I thought it might be interesting to write up something about the history of the Mt. Vernon Repeater System. Back in the early seventies (1972 or so) when Repeaters and 2 meter FM were still rather new, my brother Chuck (WA8ONN) and I bought a couple of Drake TR-22's. These were the cutting edge of 2-meter FM technology at the time. They were slightly bigger than today's mobile rigs. There was a strap so you could carry it around on your shoulder. No rubber duckie here. These rigs used telescoping whip antennas much like the CB walkie Talkies. I believe these were six channel units and you had to buy crystals to channel them up to your frequencies. A

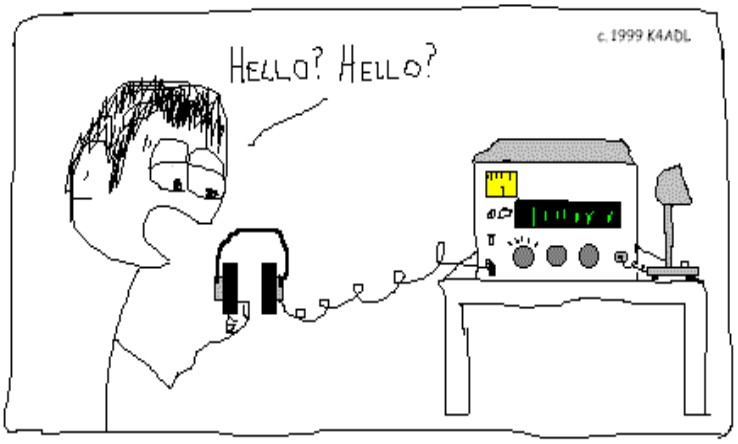
battery pack was built in and the unit weighed about five pounds. Power output was one watt with a 12-volt battery. These radios were extremely popular and typical range was 5 miles mobile to mobile. We could work into the Columbus Repeater with ease. Yes, the 16/76 Repeater was already well established. It had an auxiliary input of 146.34 MHz…

The more Chuck and I read up on the subject, the more we liked the idea of putting our own repeater on the air. Many other groups were thinking the same thing. Newark's 28/88 Repeater was just getting on the air. Canton was thinking repeaters. Galion was just putting their repeater on the air. Therefore, Chuck and I attended a couple of the Ohio Repeater Council meetings and were given the repeater frequency of 146.19 receive and 146.79 transmit. The next visit was to the Dayton Hamfest where we picked up some commercial Motorola and GE equipment. This was of course tube type stuff. No solid-state surplus back then. The Motorola commercial transceivers were made up of a complete transmitter strip and a complete receiver strip. It was easy to pull them apart and install them in there own cabinet. We did this so we could get as much separation as possible to prevent possible desense. Our purchase included a High Band Motorola transceiver (the repeater), a couple of UHF band transceivers (these were really cheap, and we bought them for 450 MHz. radio control), and a GE High Band transceiver (for our base at home). Getting the stuff was easy. Building the repeater was a challenge.

Understand that all the Ham magazines were publishing monthly articles on 2 meter FM and repeaters. The Motorola transmitter and receiver strips were very popular for repeater use, so there were numerous articles on the "how to". There were plenty of Morse code identifiers around, and a few controllers being presented. There were no commercial controllers at the time. You had to "roll your own". Other items that had to be built were COR's (carrier operated relays) to key the repeater, and audio mixers to blend the receive audio, ID audio, and controller beeper audio into the repeater transmitter. If one wanted touch tone control, then there were some surplus telephone touch tone decoders out there. These were bulky and noisy, using relays. But they seemed to work better than the homebrew projects that were available. We tried them both. The only thing solid state was the controller and ID'er. Everything else was tube type. The controller was much different by today's standard too. No microprocessors. We used IC timers (LM555, they are still around), and logical and/or IC's for the controller. To get the identifier programmed with the correct call, there was a diode matrix to solder in!

This was all so much fun! Really! It was not too long before the first Mt. Vernon Repeater went on the air as WA8ONN/R. Chuck was the electronic wizard. I was just a gofer and the guy that built the COR and Audio Mixer. But they worked! The first repeater was located in our mom and dads garage on Coshocton Avenue and Division street. The antenna for receive was a Ringo Ranger. The transmit antenna was a home brew four bay dipole array. We had not even heard about duplexers yet. The tower was only 40 feet high, so the antenna separation was not much and we did have some desense. That is how I know all about checking for desense these days! The repeater did not have much range, but we had a lot of fun testing it out while looking for a good repeater site. Chuck worked in Mansfield at the time, and he could start hitting the repeater somewhere between Bellville and Fredericktown. This was repeater number one.

Repeaters being new to Ham Radio, the FCC of course was in a panic. They felt like they had to regulate this new technology. You know, if you regulate it enough, the government makes money and you slow up the technology so you have a chance to make more rules. Well, the FCC came out with a whole bunch of new rules directed at repeaters. Had to get a special repeater license, had to get an auxiliary receiver license, had to get a control station license. Had to make antenna gain measurements. Thank goodness they saw the errors in their ways and do not require all of this now. But back then it was a pain! The Mt. Vernon group actually was granted the first Ohio Repeater license under these new regulations, WR8ABA. A group in Michigan beat us to the first WR8 call! But we have bragging rights for Ohio. We were not the first repeater in Ohio, just the first repeater licensed under the then new FCC rules and regulations. This required us to do our own antenna measurements which was a lot of fun. We actually took a field strength meter and walked around the block taking measurements. Since the repeater was still in the garage, we were able to claim direct control which made the application go smother. Then later, we applied for remote control authority when we moved it to its new location, which was repeater number two. Stay tuned next month for information on repeater number two.



THE TRANSITION FROM SHORT-WAVE-LISTENER TO HAM OPERATOR WAS SOMEWHAT DIFFICULT FOR EDMUND.

ComPIOnents, March 2006
By Mike McCardel, KC8YLD

HELLO!

Hello, arguably the most pleasant word in any language. HELLO, look for it beginning March 15. That is when ARRL will launch its HELLO campaign. HELLO is a thematic campaign that will run throughout 2006. HELLO will be based, if you haven't figured it out by now, on the word hello.

The campaign will be targeted to give the public a positive, friendly face to Amateur radio. HELLO will provide basic information about Amateur radio and will be structured to build interest that will motivate non-hams to want to explore our hobby. ARRL is hoping to converge several trends, events and expectations into the campaign. One of these is that the anticipated licensing restructuring by the FCC will eliminate the perception of a "code barrier" for entry-level people. Hopefully the restructuring will also include entry-level HF opportunities. Another is the 100-year anniversary of voice over the air. The first wireless voice transmission occurred December 24, 1906. ARRL judges there will be enough media and public interest in the anniversary to coat tale interest for Amateur Radio.

On March 15, say Hello.

SSTV

Okay, Slow Scan TV (SSTV) the bug has bitten me. A couple weeks ago, Zach (KC8YLE) and I exchange SSTV images of my grand daughter (Zach's daughter) over the K8EEN repeater. We're both hooked. Using the freeware package MMSSTV, set-up was easy. I had to play a little to get the image to transmit through my sound card and radio. However, neither Zach nor I have a TNC so we thought it went quite well. Images weren't great but once we figure out how to adjust and align it will get better. Barry (N8PPF) has also shown interest and we have been corresponding via email. I shared an article from this months Monitoring Times with Barry and gleaned some good hints from it. Recently I launched MMSSTV, put it in receive mode and tuned my radio to 14.230 USB on 20m. The following morning I saw I had captured images from Florida and Italy! Pretty cool! Over the weekend I captures nearly 90 SSTV images and made my first HF DX SSTV QSO a station in New Foundland. Now I am even more motivated to build my 2m yagi antenna and fix my rotor so that Zach, Barry and I (and anyone else) can do some SSTV simplex on 2m FM. What's next? Maybe I'll try streaming ATV on UHF. Anyone interested in an SSTV night?

KATRINA REPORT

Here is the link to the 220+ page Federal report on Katrina in pdf format. Amateur Radio is mentioned in appendix B - the "**What Went RIGHT**" section! http://www.whitehouse.gov/reports/katrina-lessons-learned.pdf "

Other organizations worked tirelessly to assist emergency responders that, due to the storm, did not have the equipment and means to effectively carry out their duties. Amateur Radio Operators from both the ***Amateur Radio Emergency Service*** and the ***American Radio Relay League,*** monitored distress calls and rerouted emergency requests for assistance throughout the U.S. until messages were received by emergency response personnel. A distress call made from a cell phone on a rooftop in New Orleans to Baton Rouge was relayed, via ham radio, from Louisiana to Oregon, then Utah, and finally back to emergency personnel in Louisiana, who rescued the 15 stranded victims.[11] Ham radio operators voluntarily manned the amateur radio

stations at sites such as the National Hurricane Center, Hurricane Watch Net, Waterway Net, Skywarn and the Salvation Army Team Emergency Radio Network. [12"]

MARCH MVARC MEETING

The next meeting of the Mount Vernon Amateur Radio Club will be 7pm Monday March 13, 2006 at the Red Cross Annex, 300 N Mulberry, Mount Vernon.

We hope to have Dave Gore of The American Red Cross present to discuss our Antenna/Radio project. After the meeting we will have our 1st annual Antenna Tuning Clinic. Bring your mag-mounts, mobiles, portables or whatever and we will help you adjust the tuning.

MARCH HAMFEST

March 3 -- Hamfest, Cave City, KY
March 8 - SW OH DX Assoc., Centerville, OH
March 18 -- Swap, Marshall, MI
March 19 -- Hamfest, Toledo, OH
March 22 -- Portage (Co.) ARC, OH
March 23 -- Summit Co. ARS, OH

MARCH WEATHER RELATED EVENTS

Flood Safety Awareness Week March 20-24
Severe Weather Awareness Week March 26 - April 1
Statewide Tornado Drill March 29

SKYWARN TRAINING

6:30pm Monday April 10, 2006 at the American Red Cross Annex, 300 N Mulberry, Mount Vernon.
Can't make it? Then try these…

Richland --- 2 sessions – March 9 -- Med Central Wellness – 12:30 Mansfield., Pioneer JVS – 6:30 -- Shelby

Marion ----- 1 session --- March 13 --- Tri-Rivers JVS – 6:30 – Marion

Huron ------ 1 session --- March 29 --- old EMA bldg – 6:30 – Norwalk

Hancock --- 1 session --- April 3 ------ Whirlpool Corp – 6:30 – Findlay

Huron ------ 1 session --- April 5 ------ Depot --------- 6:30 – Willard

Crawford –- 1 session --- April 11 ---- Sheriffs Office 6:30 - Bucyrus

Morrow ---- 1 session --- April 20 ---- Health Dept – 6:30 – Mt Gilead

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Upcoming Exam Sessions

Sponsor: CENTRAL OH ARES & OSU ARC,W8LT
Time: 9:00 AM (Walk-ins allowed)
11-Mar-2006
PRESSEY HALL - ROOM 35
1070 CARMACK RD
COLUMBUS, OH 43210

Sponsor: BUCYRUS ARC
12-Mar-2006
Time: 2:30 PM (Walk-ins allowed)
CRAWFORD COUNTY SHERIFF OFFICE
BUCYRUS, OH 44820

Sponsor: COSHOCTON CTY ARA
25-Mar-2006
Time: 10:00AM (Walk-ins allowed)
COSHOCTON PUBLIC LIBRARY
655 MAIN STREET
COSHOCTON, OH 43812

Sponsor: INTER CITY ARC
22-Apr-2006
Time: 1:00 PM (Walk-ins allowed)
SR CITZEN/TRAINING CENTER
228 ILLINOIS AVE N
MANSFIELD, OH 44905

KUDOS

Congratulations to Steve Dick, KC8YED, for his recent upgrade to General! I hope to catch him on HF sometime soon.

Congratulation to Earl Paazig, N8KBR, for making the March "QST" list of hams who passed all three ARRL Emcomm Courses. Well done, Earl!

MVARC MAP

If you get the chance visit:

http://www.frappr.com/knoxcountyhams

This is a map of members of MVARC based on their home latitude and longitude. Whereas I entered most of the members, if you want to join Frappr, I will override my entry with yours so that you can upload picture or customize your "Shout-out"

Right now each member is listed by call sign. By either clicking on the map pin or clicking on a call in the list of members you will see the person's name and their operating class, and in the case of those who joined, a picture. Note link to the forum will take you to our own MVARC forum page at www.mvarc.net.

If I missed anyone you can join from the site or email me and I will add you. If you desire to be removed from the map, just email me and I will remove you.

Until next month, "Get on the Air."

WELCOME TO THE 60'S
By Don Russell, WA8YRS

I was first licensed in late 1964. Although my memory is fuzzy about some of the details, I would like to try and recreate a bit of the magic radio presented back then. There were very few solid state radios at the time. A few broadcast band portables; some of which were AM and FM. Small miracles in those days. Certainly, no ham radio equipment had transistors in them at the time. I remember my brother Chuck, WA8ONN, and I playing with one and two transistor shortwave radios a year before being licensed. The only thing you could pick up on them was the Voice of America broadcasts. We would build them on a wooden board with nails as the connection points. We also built our share of code practice oscillators and stuff.

The first true Short Wave Radio we had was, I believe either bought by Chuck, or received as a birthday present for Chuck sometime in 1963. It was a Knight Kit Span Master receiver by Allied Radio and came in kit form. Heathkit was not the only company designing kits at the time, just the best known. Chuck did a fine job building this radio.

The Span Master is a two tube Super Regenerative receiver that covered from the AM broadcast band up to 30 MHz. This type of receiver was very sensitive, but also very broad banded. Lets say you could hear many CW signals all at the same time. It could also hear Shortwave broadcast stations and ham radio phone. AM was the most common mode back then. SSB was just starting to become popular. You had to constantly retune a SSB station though as they would drift around a bit.

FEATURES

- Continious Coverage .54 to 30 MC
- Built-in 4" PM Speaker
- Headphones Jack and Speaker Cut-off Switch
- Separate Fine Regeneration Control
- Smart Professional Appearance

SPECIFICATIONS

- FREQUENCY RANGE
  - Band A- .54 - 1.70 mc
  - Band B- 1.65 - 5.00 mc
  - Band C- 4.50 - 14.50 mc
  - Band D- 13.50 - 30.00 mc
- CONTROLS
  - Main Tuning
  - Bandspread
  - Regeneration
  - Fine Regeneration
  - Volume Control
  - Bandswitch
  - Off-On Switch
  - Phones-Speaker Switch
- TUBES
  - 6BZ6- Detector
  - 6AW8- Audio Amplifier & Power Amplifier

Anyway, this receiver got us started in the wonderful world of ham radio. Chuck and I both started attending the Novice Class licensing course that was being taught by the Mt. Vernon Amateur Radio Club. Back then, we met at the Police Station on the Square, down in the basement.

I remember running home from school (8th grade) just in time to catch the W1AW code practice in late afternoon. I was truly in heaven the first time I was able to really make sense out of what I was writing down. I was actually copying real Morse Code!

Looking at the picture, The first dial is the Main Tuning dial. It provided coarse tuning across the entire Shortwave band. The dial on the left was the Band Spread. The procedure was to set the Main Tuning somewhere close to a ham band. Like 7 MHz. Then you had to tune the Band Spread control until you started hearing CW. Then you Knew where you were and could move yourself around with confidence. Sometimes you had to play with the Main Tuning until you had it set just right.

Again looking at the picture, you can see along the

bottom from left to right the Band Selector, Regeneration Coarse Control, Regeneration Fine Control, and the Volume Control.

This was a really neat receiver and I had it at least up through the late 80's. Not sure what happened to it though. I think I threw it away! Darn!

Next Month we will look at my first transmitter.

FCC NONCOMMITTAL ON "MORSE CODE" PROCEEDING ACTION
(From the ARRL Letter)

Just when the FCC will act on the "Morse code" proceeding, WT Docket 05-235, remains hazy. The Commission released a Notice of Proposed Rule Making and Order (NPRM&O) last July proposing to eliminate the Element 1 (5 WPM) Morse code requirement for all license classes. The Amateur Radio community has filed more than 3800 comments on the proceeding, and additional comments continue to show up, even though the formal comment deadline was last October 31 (with reply comments by November 14). The next--and most-anticipated--step for the Commission is to formally adopt any revisions to its rules and conclude the proceeding with a Report and Order (R&O) that spells out the changes and specifies their effective date.

"There really is no news," an FCC Wireless Telecommunications Bureau staffer told ARRL this week on background. "We certainly hope to release WT Docket 05-235 sometime this year, but we're not making any predictions at this time. We certainly are not saving up any big announcements for Dayton Hamvention."

Beyond eliminating the Morse requirement, the FCC declined proposing any other suggested changes to the Amateur Service.

The proceeding began with 18 petitions for rule making--many just calling for the elimination of the Morse requirement but some asking for more far-reaching changes in the Amateur Service rules. The various petitions attracted a total of some 6200 comments. The FCC subsequently consolidated the petitions--including one from the ARRL asking the FCC to establish a new entry-level license class and to retain the Morse requirement only for Amateur Extra class applicants--into a single proceeding designated WT 05-235.

The FCC has not proposed extending HF privileges to current Technician licensees who have not passed a Morse code examination. In its NPRM&O the FCC suggested that in a no-Morse-requirement regime, "codeless Techs" could gain HF access by taking the Element 3 General class written examination.

Any FCC decision to eliminate the 5 WPM Morse code requirement for HF access would have *no* impact on either the current HF CW-only subbands or on the CW privileges of Amateur Radio licensees.

Before it releases an R&O on the Morse code proceeding, however, the WTB wants to wrap up action in another Amateur Radio-related docket--the "Phone Band Expansion" (or "Omnibus") NPRM in WT Docket 04-140, released April 15, 2004. A dozen petitions for rulemaking, some dating back to 2001, were consolidated in the Omnibus proceeding.

In that NPRM, the Commission proposed to go along with the ARRL's Novice refarming plan aimed at reallocating the current Novice/Tech Plus sub bands and expanding portions of the 80, 40 and 15 meter phone bands. The FCC also agreed with an ARRL proposal to extend privileges in the current General CW-only HF subbands to present Novice and Tech Plus licensees (or Technicians with Element 1 credit). WT 04-140 further proposed to essentially do away with FCC rules prohibiting the manufacture and marketing to Amateur Radio operators of amplifiers capable of operation on 12 and 10 meters.

The Satellite Beacon

A monthly article presented by the Project OSCAR Amateur Radio Club (From Sept., 2004)

This Month's Topic – What is an OSCAR Satellite?
By Don Fergeson KD6IRE – President of Project OSCAR

Project OSCAR (Orbiting Satellite Carrying Amateur Radio) started in 1960 and was responsible for the construction of the first Amateur Radio Satellite OSCAR-1, that was successfully launched from Vandenberg AFB in California. OSCAR-1 orbited the earth for 22 days, transmitting the "HI" greeting you see in Morse Code above.

In the beginning, OSCAR satellites were mostly beacons in the sky, encouraging hams all over the world to listen to them. Later, OSCARs became more sophisticated and hams could use them to communicate across great distances. OSCAR 40, for example, enabled people to communicate across distances up to 13,000 miles at one time!

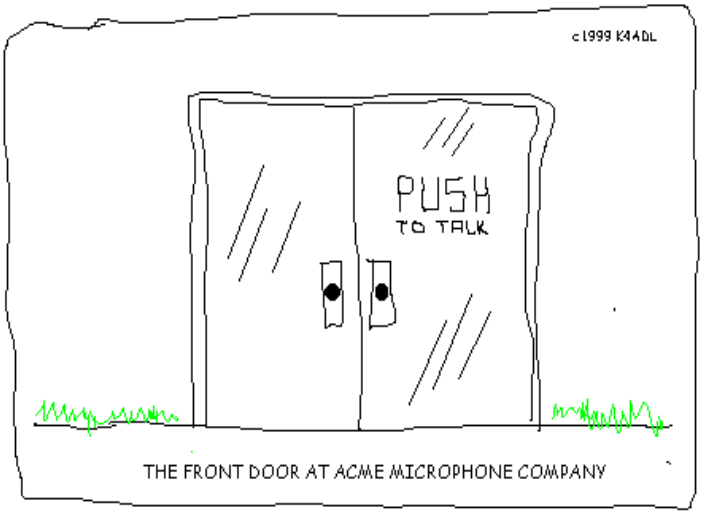
Most FM satellites are not as sophisticated as AO-40, though AO-51 or Echo approaches that level of

sophistication. AO-51 orbits the earth at an altitude of ~800km every 94 minutes, and allows hams to communicate across continents using small hand held FM radios or easy to assemble ground stations. This easy to use radio system means that working satellites is not limited to a select few - all hams are entitled to use them. If you want to look beyond you local repeater, this is for you.

If you have never used a satellite to communicate before, here are some tips: Visit the Project OSCAR website at http://www.projectoscar.net to find some information, or visit the AMSAT website at http://www.amsat.org. Both websites will give you some great information to get started such as the proper frequencies and PL tones, as well as some easy to follow instructions.

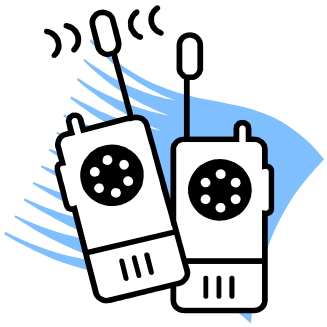
More importantly, contact your local representative for AMSAT who is called your area coordinator, or drop us a line through the Project OSCAR website. If you need additional help, or if you belong to a local radio club, invite your local AMSAT area coordinator to come and speak to your group.

Contributed by Don Fergeson KD6IRE – President of Project OSCAR



MVARC
Mt. Vernon Amateur Radio Club

Minutes for the February 14, 2006 Meeting.



Annual Club Christmas Dinner Meeting held at Ryan's Steak House on Coshocton Avenue in Mt. Vernon.

Attendees:

Ruben Clark, KB2SAI
Don Russell, WA8YRS
Bob Bruff, N8PCE
Jack Koelbl, N8JQZ
Don Bunner, KB8QPO
Mike McCardel KC8YLD
Jim Rowe, N8TVO
Earl Paazig, N8KBR
Sondra Paazig, N8RNB
Bob McBride, N8QPM
Barry Butz. N8PPF
Jeff Butz, N8SMT
Steve Dick, KC8YED
Harold Rush, AB8BI
Jim Harris, KI8H
Larry Helser, AA8WP
Danielle Jenkins, KG8FP
Don Henderson, KA8LIZ

Also attending were various wives, children, friends and guests.

President Ruben Clark, KB2SAI opened the meeting at 7:36 P.M.

Emergency Coordinator Bob McBride, N8QPM said there will be a SKYWARN training session April 10th @ 6:30 P.M. at the Mt. Vernon Red Cross Center. Bob also mentioned that a date has not been set for the Multi-County SET because so many agencies want to be involved. He will keep up posted.

Public Information Officer Mike McCardel, KC8YLD directed everyone to his website http://www.mccardel.net/hamradio/ where there is a discussion of House Resolution 320. The ARRL is encouraging everyone to write their congressman to endorse this resolution that requests the FCC to comprehensively evaluate BPL's (Broadband over Power Lines) potential Interference. This resolution is sponsored by Rep. Mike Ross, WD5DVR, of Arkansas. You can find information and sample letters to congressmen on Mike's website.

Mike also mentioned that as a result of the popularity of the annual ARRL Straight Key Night that a group of Hams have formed the Straight Key Century Club. (SKCC) http://www.skccgroup.com/ .

Skywarn has asked that we try to hit their repeater at 444.70, which has a pl of 142.??.

There is a regional 2 meter simplex net in the Cleveland area that meets the 4th Sunday 146.430 KA8RL operates it. Everyone is invited to try it out.

Mike also mentioned that club member and great friend Dave Rankin, K4AWO has recently passed away.

Don, WA8YRS and Barry, N8PPF gave a report on the repeaters. The 2 meter repeater is doing fine. The 440 repeater was taken off line today for maintenance and will be back up as soon as Steve, KC8YED gets a chance to look at it. The 6 meter repeater at 53.79 with a –1 MHz offset is up and running and seems to be doing pretty good. They plan on having a better receive antenna up shortly.

Meeting adjourned 7:55 P.M.

REPEATERS AND STUFF
BY DON RUSSELL, WA8YRS

From what I have heard, everyone had a good time at the February meeting. It is nice to get together once in a while for food and friendship and we should do it more often. In fact, one of the things I am going to bring up at the March meeting is to schedule a few more events like this one. I am thinking of the 5th Sunday dinner we used to do. I looked a while back and there are about four of these events this year. Maybe we can schedule in a 5th Sunday dinner or two. It does not have to be a meeting, just a time when friends get together. Also, I do not believe we have been doing the Wednesday night dinner at Pizza Hut lately. Every week is too much for me, but how about setting a monthly time for it? The last Wednesday of the month may be a possibility.

As mentioned during the February meeting, the 440 repeater is on the blink. The problem occurs after the repeater has been used a while. The receiver goes whacko and the audio gets distorted. It has been getting progressively worse, so Barry, N8PPF, and I figured it was time to get it looked at.

The 2 meter repeater continues to work flawlessly. I am very proud to have helped update this repeater several years back. The power went out at the water tower in February for about 6 hours, and things worked as they were designed to. There was no downtime with this repeater due to the automatic battery backup system that Barry had developed. Nice. From experience in December of 2004 when the power was out for about four days at the water tower, we know the repeater will last a long time on battery backup. If one notices the repeater on battery back up, please feel free to use the repeater as you normally would. It is good to run the battery down once in a while, I always have a fully charged battery at home ready to go if we need it.

It was mentioned by Jim, KI8H, that he has given several calls out on the repeater and no one has come back to him. I am afraid that is the situation with a small group such as ours. I do know that lots of people monitor the repeater but do not get on the air much. Please, if you hear someone giving a call on our repeater and no one comes back to him/her, give them a call. You may find that you are having a bit of fun. This is especially important when you hear someone you have never heard before. Many hams drive through Mt. Vernon just looking for a QSO to pass the time. We want to be known as a friendly group. While we do not have the large ham population that Columbus has we can all do more to increase activity on the repeater.

Barry got the 6 meter receive antenna up last month. We have had a few problems with the repeater since then, however I think everything is working very good at the present time. I have also done my part by finally getting the regular repeater transmitter working properly. The audio now sounds very good and I have freed up my FT-847 for more serious shortwave work. I was able to get into the 6 meter repeater from Mansfield a month or so ago. Now that the new antenna is up, it will be interesting to see if there is any improvement up that way.

I finally bit the bullet and joined the Straight Key Century Club that Mike, KC8YLD, has be talking about. I made my first contact the other day and had a half hour QSO at about 10 wpm. It brought back memories of my Novice days and was fun. The 40 meter Novice band has more activity than I have heard in several years because of this club. If you are a Tech Plus, Novice, or any other class rusty in the art of CW, this is a good club to join. Even if you don't join the club, you can tune in and make a few QSO's. Everyone seems friendly and willing to slow down when requested. The good news is that with a straight key, you can only go so fast anyway.

If you would like to get a Straight Key Century Club (SKCC) number, send an email to Tom, KC9ECI at: tom@galesvillefiredepartment.org

Tom is of course, SKCC #1. Also check out their web page at: http://www.skccgroup.com/

Listen around the frequency of 7.120 MHz. and join the fun. For other frequencies, check out the web site.

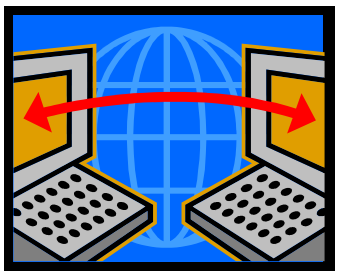
Field Day will be coming soon. It is always the last full weekend in June. Mike, KC8YLD, and I have decided to co chair the FD committee. Anyone else wishing to be on the committee please let us know.

The site will either be the Red Cross Annex building, which would provide a real challenge, or our usual FD site out at the Fairgrounds. The number of stations we have going will depend on which site we use. I would like to make a real effort on making a few satellite contacts this year. That is something we talked about last year, but never really put an effort into it. I have a portable antenna in the works which may be of some use in this endeavor.

73 until next month.

Use EchoLink and your PC to expand your ham radio horizons

By JIM BROOKS, KY4Z
Kentucky Section PIC



The entry of computers into the average ham's ham shack began in the infancy of personal computing, and today there are few hams who don't own at least one computer. Computers were first used as terminals for digital communications and to automate tasks like logging radio contacts. But in recent years, computers have become an integral part of most modern transceivers, and most new radios can be easily interfaced with a PC for control and programming.

What is EchoLink?

Echolink allows licensed amateur radio operators to connect to one another via the Internet using a variety of equipment and modes. Hams may use EchoLink to connect their computers to one another for a one-on-one direct QSO, or to operate a remote station via a computer control link. One of the most common uses for EchoLink is to connect to distant repeaters via existing computer-to-radio links around the world. By using the EchoLink software, a ham can talk around the world using the Internet as the “bridge” between his computer and the distant station. You can access EchoLink either with a radio or a computer. If you are in range of an FM repeater or simplex station equipped with EchoLink, you can use DTMF commands from your radio to access the EchoLink network. If you are a licensed amateur with an Internet-connected PC, you can access EchoLink stations directly from your PC.

The closest EchoLink-enabled repeater to my location is the 146.70 repeater sponsored by the Bullitt Amateur Radio Society. The amount of activity on the repeater has increased significantly since EchoLink was added, thanks in part to the fact that former Kentucky hams now have a way to connect with old friends via the repeater.

How do I get started?

First, download the software from the EchoLink Web site (www.echolink.org). You will be asked to provide your callsign and e-mail address. Then, install the software on your PC, and be sure you have a good Internet connection (56k modem or better). The first time you use EchoLink, the system will automatically put in a request for your callsign and password to be validated. The request will be reviewed, and once you are validated (which usually takes less than a day), you're ready to go.

How does EchoLink handle security?

Each new user of EchoLink must be validated. Each new request for validation is reviewed individually, and many are followed up with a request for proof of valid license. After having been validated, each EchoLink user must provide a password, along with his or her callsign, to log in. Each time a connection is made for a QSO, the EchoLink servers verify both the sender and the receiver before communication can begin. In addition, if you wish, you can configure EchoLink to accept connections only from certain types of stations: repeaters, links, users, or all three. You can also set up a list of any number of "banned" callsigns, which will not be allowed access. In addition, you can block or accept connections according to their international callsign prefix, in order to comply with your country's rules regarding reciprocal control-operator privileges or third-party traffic restrictions.

Does EchoLink spread computer viruses or worms?

In short, no. Unlike software such as e-mail programs, file-sharing programs, and Web browsers, EchoLink does not have any way to accept "attachments" that might harm your computer. There are no known cases of EchoLink accepting or spreading a computer virus.

What about remote control?

For enhanced remote control, EchoLink includes a built-in, password-protected Web server which can be set up to accept commands from any Internet-connected computer. Basic functions allow you to remotely enable or disable the link, disconnect stations, and see who is currently using it. The software also supports a basic and extended set of DTMF commands for control over a radio link. For example, you can key in either the node number or the callsign of the station you wish to connect to.

Can I run EchoLink on my Mac?

Yes. While the EchoLink software is designed specifically to run under Microsoft Windows, there is a Mac version that works with OS X. Currently there are no plans to offer versions of EchoLink for other platforms. The EchoMac program by N9YTY is compatible with EchoLink. If you wish to use it, you’ll still need to register with EchoLink to get started. Be aware that EchoLink has no support for EchoMac users.

How does EchoLink handle non-hams?

For proper security, the servers with which EchoLink communicates require that only duly-licensed Amateur Radio operators have access to the system. This means that before you can use EchoLink, someone will soon be review your request for access. When access is granted, the list of logged-in stations will automatically appear when you run the EchoLink software. Depending upon system conditions, the validation process could take less than an hour, or occasionally as long as 24 hours.

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 Schedule: $20 regular, $10 for second member in the same family, $10 for over 65 years of age, and $15 for those living outside Knox County.

Mail Dues to: **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)___ EMail_____

Extra Donation (Optional)_____

Members are entitled to a free MVARC E-Mail address.

Would you like one? No_____Yes_____

If yes please enter password_____

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