

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

March, 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)



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The view from the Presidents Desk



It's early Sunday morning and Bill has been after me to get something in to him! As usual it seems that someone drops in and consumes all our time on Saturdays or we are needed somewhere and we are in our car. I guess I need to manage my time better and get this done earlier in the week but I am a person that works on deadlines. Meaning that it is usually the right on the deadline where I work best, well at least work.

Well spring is close, warming up some and plenty of mud around my house and barns. It looks like a busy spring for us. On March 18th a Saturday, we will be participating in the Woodland Trails Freeze-In, being held at the Faith Baptist Church on Martinsburg Road. We will be there from 9:00 am - 12:00 pm, demonstrating our hobby to some young and future hams. Parents will be with them, so we will have their attention also. So we will need some volunteers there working with the demonstrations and some on the repeater to talk with the kids. We will make the final plans Monday night at the club meeting.

Speaking of the meeting Monday 14th, Matt Murphy will be there to discuss the upcoming event at Foundation Park June 16, 17, and 18th with the Boy Scouts (I think that it is called Scout Fest). So if you are interested please plan to attend as there will be plenty of chances to participate in this event.

April looks to be a busy month as the 17th is the Earth Day Challenge at Kenyon College. This has been a great event in the past to work. We also have the 2nd annual NVIS on the April 25th at 1400 UTC. We had a great, although cold time last year at Foundation Park. I look forward to participating in this again this year.

Well, the last thing I need to mention to all, is that Don Russell W8PEN and I met with Rod Cook Director of the American Red Cross in our region. I am glad to announce that we have space in the Training Building to store some equipment such as our go boxes etc. This will give us a more central place to distribute equipment as needed. He also offered space to set up a club station so look forward to that happening here sometime soon.

73

Hope to see you at one of the meeting places soon:

Monday 14th 7:00 pm American Red Cross
 Training Facility

Any Friday at 10:00 am at Hardees

Frank KC8EVS

I followed Tom Evans KD8HSA into the Alcove Restaurant carrying the go boxes on Monday, Feb 29. We talked to the group for approximately 35-45 minutes and answered questions. There were approximately 30 in attendance and they enjoyed Tom's presentation. He briefly covered who amateur radio operators are and a little history. We also discussed the club and our activities. It seems that they participate in the Earth Day Challenge at Kenyon also, so we have something in common. Several commented that they did not know that we existed so it was good to get out and meet with the group and get our name in front of them. I think that they would have liked a live demonstration so next time we need to make sure someone is listening on the repeater. In keeping with our eating activities it was not a bad lunch. I would recommend it, of course I'm not an expert but it never stopped me from putting in my two cents.

Frank, KC8EVS



Editors Musings

2016 is starting out gangbusters for our Ham Radio Club. First, our Technician class was a great success with 7 graduates and receiving their Call Signs. A list of our new Hams is on page 6 of this Newsletter. Please congratulate all our new Hams and give them a welcome and a handshake. Thanks to Don Russell (W8PEN) for his countless hours of preparation, dedication and effort in making this class a success.

We have started a Morse Code class last week, being held in the Red Cross building every Thursday at 7:00 pm. The class requires a little time every day for practice, but it's well worth the effort as it brings a lot of fun and many hours of enjoyment. There is a modest fee for the CD's Don has made up for each participant.

Another project the club has going on is the Mesh Network. Again, Don Russell has spearheaded this project as well as Barry Butz (N8PPF) and others. Scott Keyes (AC8PT) has given many hours of time and investment into the advancement and completion of this project as well. Thank you Scott.

US Amateur Radio Numbers Reach an All-Time High. Amateur Radio growth in the US continues to soar. At the end of 2014, the total number of radio amateurs in the FCC's Universal Licensing System ([ULS](#)) database reached an all-time high of 726,275. The trend has continued in the first 2 months of 2015, which saw the ham population rise to slightly more than 727,000. Please read the complete article on [ARRL.org](#).

We can all hope Spring is finally here, or at least some warmer temperatures which are forecast for the next couple of weeks. Nice sunny days make us feel better, improves our mood and attitude. It certainly makes life better at my house. Hope to hear everyone on the radio or at one of our scheduled restaurants or at our next monthly meeting. 73's all and take care. –Bill KC8BB

The Mt. Vernon Amateur Radio Club Officers

President: Frank Counts, KC8EVS
fcounts@gmail.com
Phone: 740-358-9131

Vice President: Tom Evans, KD8HSA
tom65@embarqmail.com
Phone: 740-625-5138

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@arri.net
Phone: 740-397-0249

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

Directors:
Emery Bennett, W8TW
ebenn2002@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
Phone: 740-326-1090

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

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

**Newsletter Editor &
Facebook Editor:**
Bill Bradley, KC8BB
wjabradley@yahoo.com
Phone: 740-397-0267

Minutes of the MVARC monthly meeting held February 8th, 2016

Meeting called to order by President KC8EVS at 7:07 PM.

Motion to approve Minutes from January meeting by AC8PT, 2nd W8TW. Approved.

KC8UR gave February's Treasurers report. Motion to Approve W8PEN, 2nd KD8HSA. Approved.
Repeater committee report; W8PEN, all okay.

Upcoming Mansfield Hamfest was discussed. AC8PT moved, KD8WSI 2nd that the Treasurer be instructed to supply the Club Hamfest Table committee with \$50.00 start up cash for change. Majority Approved. 1 abstained.

KD8EVS turned the floor over to N8SY, our Ohio Section Manager. N8SY, discussed the importance of the 4 ICS courses (ICS-100, ICS-200, ICS-700, & ICS-800) that will be needed for joint ARES and FEMA operations. He also stated in the future some personnel may need to take additional ICS courses as well.

KB2SAI introduced KD8PSM as the new Assistant ARES EC for Knox County. KD8PSM will be the Liaison between the County EMA, the local ARES, and the club. KB2SAI and KD8PSM stated the EMA would like 4 club members to help make sure the Amateur station at the EMA office is assembled in an efficient design and is functional for emergency service. KC8EVS will appoint a group to cover these duties.

A long discussion followed about the problems experienced between the Local ARES organization and the club. An explanation of what the relationship between the ARES and the Club should be was covered in detail by N8SY.

Discussion about looking into purchasing a new repeater was revisited. W8TW moved, and AC8PT 2nd that the club purchase the Yaesu VR-1 Fusion Repeater at the price of \$600.00 if approved by KC8EVS and a committee he appoints.

KC8EVS announced that W8PEN and KD8HSA will be giving a talk and demonstration on amateur radio to the local Kiwanis group.

KC8EVS also stated we have been asked to put on a demonstration for The Wooden Trails group on March 11th and 12th. This event will be held at the Faith Baptist Church.

W8PEN moved, KB2SAI 2nd, the club donate \$150.00 to the Knox County Chapter of The American Red Cross for use of their building. Approved.

It was mentioned that the club may try and operate 2 different sites for NVIS. This will be discussed further at the March meeting.

No 50/50 drawing this month.

A door prize of a "2016 ARRL HANDBOOK" was donated by N8SY and won by KD8HSA. Thanks for the donation Scott.

There were 15 members and 3 guest present.
Motion to adjourn made by AC8PT, 2nd KE8ANS. Approved.

Respectfully submitted,
N8IBR Secretary MVARC

By Don Russell, W8PEN

Ramblings of a Contester Want-a-Be

I was looking forward to trying out my three J-Poles during the ARRL DX Contest (CW). Unfortunately, I do not believe the antennas lived up to my expectations. They did okay, but not as well as hoped for. I will say that in the pine trees, they make nice, stealthy antennas and do a satisfactory enough job. Just not what I am looking for. They will be taken down but not destroyed. Maybe I will try them Field Day.

So, just for giggles, I put up a 20 meter dipole to play with in my search for National Parks on the Air. It is not up very high at about 20 or 25 feet, but it has done a decent enough job. I have worked several of the parks with it. However, I would probably have worked them with the 160 meter window anyways.

The 160 meter window has done an incredible job on 20 meters working the parks. I have busted quite a few large pile up's and it makes me wonder why the window does not do as well during contests. At least on 20 – 10 meters. Could it be the operator? Naw.....

It is a few days before the ARRL DX Contest (SSB) and I am thinking of replacing the 20 meter dipole antenna with a 20 meter vertical loop. It would not be hard to put up since I already have the rope in the trees. Basically lowering the dipole and replacing it with the loop. When I strung the dipole, I made sure that it was pointing broadside to the North-East and South-West. I figure during the DX contest you would be working a lot of Europeans. Like the dipole, the loop radiates broadside to the wires so the aiming would be the same and I would get a 2 db or 3 db gain out of the loop. Since there already is a 20 meter loop in my Field Day Box, I just might go ahead and put it up there. If nothing else, it will indicate whether or not a permanent loop may be the answer I am looking for.

Long range plans are to install a rotatable dipole at the top of my 48 foot tower. I had one of these once and it worked out really well. Unfortunately, I constructed it to be an experimental antenna and it only lasted a couple of years. I have been thinking of ways to make a rotatable antenna last a little bit longer. Like 10 or 20 years! Good luck with that.

Another idea I had was to build a 20 meter Vertical Phased Array. This would involve two verticals spaced about 40 feet apart. You would use equal lengths of coax fed into a coaxial "T" and then into the shack. The SWR would be about 2:1, which is nothing to the internal antenna tuner of the rig. Gain would be better than a dipole and radiation angle would be low for the DX. However, then you would have to fuse with ground radials or have the vertical part of the antenna up high enough to have elevated radials. Starting to sound like a bunch of work to me.

That is one thing about wire antenna. They are pretty cheap. You can build something one day, tear it down the next, and use the left over wire to try a different antenna. One of the areas in ham radio that has not been spoiled by the microchip industry.

Sadly, the end of the Contest Season is approaching. Spring and Summer starts to limit our on the air activity. Oh yes, there will be a few contests throughout the summer. State QSO parties, Special Event Stations, and Field Day. But the major contest almost every weekend will end until next fall. That means it is time to get your station ready for next year. I seem to get hung up on antennas. Maybe the next few months we can work on station design as a major theme for this column.

Once again, this is supposed to be a "Team Effort" Column. Anyone wishing to "Guest Author" this column, just let me know.

By Dan Romanchik, KB6NU

In the last ten years, there's been an explosion in social media. I've found some to be really great. Others, I haven't found to be to my liking. Here are my opinions on a few of the most popular social media websites:

* Twitter (twitter.com). I like Twitter. I have more than 3,000 followers on Twitter, and it's not only helped me sell more books, I've found out about a lot of great projects, and I've met and corresponded with a lot of great hams there. It's a lot of fun. If you have a Twitter account, follow me there. I'm @kb6nu.

* Facebook (facebook.com). I have a Facebook account and I even have a page for my study guides. I don't like using Facebook, though, and avoid it when I can.

* Reddit (reddit.com/r/amateurradio). Reddit hosts a very active amateur radio forum. What I like about Reddit is that these guys, unlike say the forums on eHam.Net or QRZ.Com are really interested in doing stuff, not just complaining or arguing. A lot of the hams on Reddit, and it's associated IRC channel (talk about retro!), #redditnet, have used my study guides, and apparently, I'm quite popular there.

* Blab (blab.im). Blab is an interesting concept. It's kind of like an interactive podcast. You can record the blab sessions and then post them to YouTube or your own website. When I suggested having a regular Blab session to talk about ham radio topics to my blog readers, they weren't very enthusiastic about it. Even so, I think that I'm just going to do it. Sometimes you just gotta go with your gut, and my gut says this could be fun and eventually popular. Blab is integrated with Twitter, so if you follow me on Twitter, you'll find out when I'm blabbing.

The biggest problem with participating on these social networks, of course, is that it takes a lot of time, time that could be used for building stuff or getting on the air. Even so, I would say that, overall, using them has certainly increased my enjoyment of amateur radio and has connected me to people that I probably would not have connected with otherwise.

What do you think? What social media accounts do you have? Which do you prefer? What have they done for you?

When he's not blabbing or tweeting, KB6NU likes to work CW, build stuff, and teach ham radio classes. 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 any comments, questions, compliments, or complaints, email him at cwgeek@kb6nu.com.

This years Technician Class Course produced seven new hams. Testing was done March 27, 2016 at the Red Cross Training Center.

The following took the class and passed the VE test session for the Technician Class license:

Mark Peakovic: KE8DKF
Harold Bower: KE8DKG
Ralph Bower: KE8DKH
Hank Keller: KE8DKI
Caleb Keller: KE8DKJ
Ryan Rupp: KE8DKK
Pete Lawhon: KE8DKL

We had two from Licking Counting visit our test session and passed their Technician Class Test:

Jamie Marcum: KE8DKD
Erven Carson: KE8DKE

Upgrading from General to Extra was:

Robert Rittenhouse: KC8TAD

Going from zero to Extra (WOW!) was:

Boyd Bill: AC8VU

As the club has done the last five or so years, members of the Tech Class that has passed the VE testing will be rewarded with one year free membership in our club. This partially off sets the testing fee and hopefully when the new hams see how friendly and helpful members of our radio club are, they will want to continue their membership for many years to come.

Please welcome these new hams as they learn the art of ham radio and start checking into our repeater system. Extending a helping hand will go a long way in getting these hams off and running on the right foot.

New Morse Code Class

Don Russell, W8PEN, has started a new Morse Code Class. There is still time to join in on the fun. Contact Don for more information at w8pen@arrl.net. Even though the class started Thursday, March 3rd, more students are welcome. The CD's that have been created for the Class will work fine for self study and students can catch up readily.

Morse Code is very challenging. But once learned it can be lot of fun. The Straight Key Century Club (<http://www.skccgroup.com/>) is devoted to the art of operating CW with a straight key. They have many activities and Awards throughout the year and most of the operating is done at 10 words per minute or less. Even old timers like me monitor the frequencies this group used and join in on the fun. You don't have to be a speed demon to enjoy using CW.

Hello everyone!

I hope you all are enjoying the unseasonably warm winter we have been having so far this year. I know I am not complaining after the past few winters we've had! Speaking of weather, we have a Skywarn weather spotter class happening next Monday. I hope to see you there!

I would like to take a moment and introduce you all to the new Assistant Emergency Coordinator for Knox County ARES. His name is Pat Valentino, KD8PSM. Here is a little bit about Pat, in his own words:

"In 2008 I retired from a 30-year career in electronics as a Senior Laboratory Specialist from IBM's facility located in Research Triangle Park, North Carolina. During my career I participated in teams that designed custom test equipment, product development and finally, testing products for Electro-Magnetic Compatibility. I have experience in characterizing electronic assemblies, keeping people safe and securing facilities.

I now live in Mount Vernon where I assist the Knox County Emergency Management Agency as a volunteer planning for emergencies and designing exercises to test the county's preparedness. Locally, I have responded with the American Red Cross and Medical Reserve Corps.

I acquired a Technician Class License in 2011 and I am committed to Amateur Radio. I am passionate about the community where I live and being prepared for a disaster or emergency situation. I am excited about learning from everyone and contributing to the county's overall emergency preparedness capability."

Please welcome Pat aboard when you see him! I believe he will be a great asset in helping us as a group. He will be facilitating some of our projects, especially those that relate to working with our County EMA office.

Here are a few events and dates coming up to keep in mind:

Along with Knox County EMA, we will be hosting Skywarn weather-spotter training at the Memorial Theater again this year. This will be on Monday, March 7th, from 6:30-8:30 PM. If you are planning on attending, please come a little early to get registered. This is open to everyone and there is no cost, so invite others! It is excellent training for everyone to have to know how to spot and what to do during severe weather.

Franklin County ARES is supporting the Arnold Sports Festival, to be held in Columbus, March 3-6. This is one of the major events that FCARES supports, and is a huge event for Columbus. Something like 18,000 athletes will be attending, and visitors will easily number near 100,000. There are two venues- the Convention Center downtown, and the Ohio State Fairgrounds. Operators are needed to lend assistance mostly as embeds with medical teams assigned for each event. The greatest need is for operators Sunday the 6th in the morning through mid afternoon, but any amount of time on any day will help. Please let me know if you're interested and I will connect you with the event organizer.

ARRL HQ is offering an ARES training session on Tuesday, 1 March, at 8:00 PM ET that will go over how ARES forms are filled out, and how the submitted information is used. The training is free, delivered in webinar form, and can be viewed from the comfort of your own home.

Registration link here: <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/4514424691371387394>.



Until next time, 73's!
Ruben Clark, KB2SAI
Knox County ARES Emergency Coordinator

By Don Russell, W8PEN

During this years Technician Class Course I attempted to demonstrate the Clubs Echolink System. This demo did not go too well. I found that I had forgotten most of the codes that I had set up to make Echolink easier to use. Technically, the codes to the Echolink did not work either, but that was a simple audio adjustment when I got home.

This experience made me realize that it has been a while since the club published user information about the Echolink on our repeater. Did you know that you don't have to wait for someone from another Echolink system to check into our repeater before you can use our Echolink? You can initiate a contact with a few simple keypad inputs. So lets get started.

Here are some handy codes to remember. Entering these codes from your radio keypad performs the following operations:

Code	Result
#00	Connect to a Random Node
#01	Connect to a Random Link
#03	Connect to a Random User
#*XXXX	Connect to a known Node where XXXX is the Node Number.
#	Disconnect from a Station or Node.

For clarification, the * is the star key on the keypad. The # is the pound key on the keypad.

Please notice that everything begins with the # (pound) key. This is because the K8EEN-R (2 meter) repeater blocks keypad tones unless the sequence starts with the # key.

In addition to these basic codes, there are a few station shortcut codes.

#80	K40BX-R	Hatteras Island, N.C.
#82	KG8FV-R:	Polk, Ohio (Ashland County)
#84	W8DF-R:	Battle Creek, Michigan
#86	NX5V-L:	Springdale, Arkansas
#90	W5NWA-R	Harrison, Arkansas

Echolink Update Continued on Page 9

I would love to add more station shortcuts to the list. If you find you have a favorite station to connect to just let me know and I can set up a station shortcut for you.

As an example, if one wishes to connect to K4OBX-R simply key in #80 on their radios keypad. Echolink will respond with: "Connecting to K4OBX REPEATER". If K4OBX-R has their Echolink system turned on, Echolink will establish the connection. Then Echolink will announce the fact: "Connected!". If K4OBX-R is not online, then the message "K4OBX REPEATER not found" will occur. If K4OBX-R is on but there was a failed connect attempt, Echolink will respond: "Not connected -- Time out". Which means you should try a bit later.

After the connection is made, you can give a general call just as you normally would using your radio. I usually say something like "This is W8PEN listening via Echolink". If someone answers, you simply carry on a QSO as you would if you were talking to a local station. It is very important that the repeater courtesy beeps are paid attention to. Proper operation of Echolink relies on the observance of the courtesy beeps.

After the QSO, one needs to disconnect Echolink from the system by pressing the # (Pound) button on the keypad. Echolink will respond: "K4OBX REPEATER DISCONNECTED". If you do not get this response, please try the # key again. Remember to hold the # key down for ½ a second or so.

To connect to a random Node, Link, or User, simply key in the appropriate Code (#00, #01, or #03).

Echolink will respond with: "Connecting to XXXXX", where XXXXX is the call sign of the station being randomly connected to. One needs to wait until Echolink establishes the connection and says: "CONNECTED TO XXXX".

From here on, you may get a message from the connected station, a repeater call sign and courtesy beep, or nothing at all. Nothing at all does not mean you are not connected. It just means the sys op of that link has not set up an introduction.

Follow the same procedure as with the K4OBX-R demo and announce that you are monitoring: "This is W8PEN listening via Echolink". If you receive no response, try again. If nothing happens after several tries, then disconnect using the # key as in the previous example and try another random code. This will allow Echolink to try connecting to a different random link. Think of this as calling "CQ" like on the HF bands. Keep doing it until you get a response, or give up. It is fun and I have actually talked to a lot of stations around the world using the Echolink in this way. Just be prepared to retry several times until you are successful.

Follow all the same steps from the above examples to connect to a node that you already know. Just remember to press the #* on the keypad before entering the node number. But, be sure to enter it all in sequence without stopping: #*XXXX.

Please feel free to try the Echolink systems on the K8EEN repeater. It is open for all to use. If anyone has any difficulties, please let me know.

Again, if you have any favorite Echolink stations, let me know. I can add a speed key so that you can simply enter a few keypad figures to get connected.

Lastly, there are a few "Echolink Nets" out there. These nets can run for hours and hours! If you wish to check into one of these nets, please set up your own computer to use Echolink and check into the net that way. We do not need to tie up our repeater by checking into these nets. Thanks for being a courteous Echolink repeater user.

March 2016

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2 5:00 pm Dinner at Southside Diner	3	4 10:00 am Breakfast at Hardee's	5
6 9:00 pm ARES Sunday Night Net on K8EEN KC8BB –Bill	7 Skywarn Spotter Class 6:30 - 8:30 pm Memorial Bldg All Hams welcome !	8	9 5:00 pm Dinner at Southside Diner	10 7:00 pm Morse Code Class Red Cross Bldg.	11 10:00 am Breakfast at Hardee's	12 9:00 am Breakfast at Allison's Finer Diner
13 9:00 pm ARES Sunday Night Net on K8EEN W8PEN –Don	14 7:00 PM MVARC meeting at the Knox County Red Cross Building	15	16 5:00 pm Dinner at Southside Diner	17 7:00 pm Morse Code Class Red Cross Bldg.	18 10:00 am Breakfast at Hardee's	19
20 First Day of Spring! 9:00 pm ARES Sunday Night Net on K8EEN KD8WSI –John	21	22	23 5:00 pm Dinner at Southside Diner	24 7:00 pm Morse Code Class Red Cross Bldg.	25 10:00 am Breakfast at Hardee's	26
27 9:00 pm ARES Sunday Night Net on K8EEN KD8HSA –Tom	28	29	30 5:00 pm Dinner at Southside Diner	31 7:00 pm Morse Code Class Red Cross Bldg.	<u>April 1</u> 10:00 am Breakfast at Hardee's	