Ham Radio Rocks!

The Mt. Vernon Amateur Radio Club

May, 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

New Location for May MVARC Meeting

As voted on at the April meeting, a new location for our Mt. Vernon Amateur Radio Club meetings is being tried out in May. I stress that this is a simply a test and the club has made no commitments one way or the other for future meetings.

The site of the May meeting will be the Mt. Vernon Firehouse, 200 West Gambier Street, Mt. Vernon, Ohio (the corner of West Gambier and Sandusky Street). This is the site of our last Ham test session and everyone was impressed with the room.

There is plenty of parking in the front of the building on West Gambier Street, as well as on the street itself. There is a large parking lot in the back of the building off of Ohio Avenue. One would have to walk around to the front to get in though, as the back doors are always locked.

It was also agreed that whether or not we change meeting sites, the MVARC will still support the Knox County American Red Cross in every way possible.

During the meeting there was much discussion on whether to change meeting sites. The Training Center has been a really good place to hold meetings and the Red Cross has been very generous in letting us use the center for other things such as our Ham Radio Classes and even Field Day for a couple of years. In the end, members wanted to give the Firehouse a try.

The next meeting of the Mt. Vernon Amateur Radio Club will be ***Monday, May 14, 2012 at 7:00 P.M. at the Mt. Vernon Firehouse, 200 West Gambier Street, Mt. Vernon, Ohio****. Note the change in location.*

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, May12, 2012 at 9:00 AM at Allison's Finer Diner, 11587 Upper Gilchrist Road,* Mt. Vernon, Ohio*****

From The Pen Of W8PEN

The summer is nearly upon us and that means many hams are thinking about Field Day. This includes your editor. While I really love contesting and have done many, many contests in the past, things have slowed down for me. Now, my number one contesting event is Field Day. In fact, it was the only contest I participated in last year.

Of course, the ARRL advertises Field day as an emergency preparedness drill and right they are. Why else would we set up equipment out in a field, use batteries and generators, and set up temporary antennas? Certainly not because it is fun to do so! Okay….. Maybe a little fun!

My first Field Day was in June of 1965 when I was a Novice Class ham. Back then, a Novice was only allowed to use Morse Code on restricted parts of 80, 40, and 15 meters. They were also allowed to use voice on 2 meters, but back then there was nobody on 2 meters. FM and Repeaters were not even heard of then.

We set up on Friday night at Memorial Park. Personal power generators were rare back then and the National Guard set up a 5KW generator for us to use. It came on a trailer, was huge, and very loud.

I really did not know it was Field Day. Members just told me to show up at Memorial Part and help set up equipment. I was 15 or 16 at the time. It was a fun weekend but I mostly watched. I did CQ endlessly on 2 meters and made a couple of contacts. Can't remember if there was even a Novice Station set up. If there was, I don't remember using it.

From that day on, Field Day became one of my favorite ham activities. For years I participated with the club. Sometimes when the club members got a bit lazy and wanted to do Field Day at our meeting site where antennas were already set up and using commercial power, I would go astray and do Field Day with a few ham buddy's.

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.

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Then there was a point in which I dropped out of the club to pursue life in other directions. Even then, my brother Chuck, AC8R (WA8ONN at the time) and i, would go out in the Fields and do Field Day as 2B (two operators and one transmitter). A few times we did do it at my house, but I didn't have any antennas set up at the time, so we basically had to do it from scratch just like in the Field.

I also did a few years as 1B (one operator and one transmitter). I jokingly called this the anti social class. I did this at a friends house and would set up one thirty foot antenna mast and a 80 meter doublet antenna. One antenna, all bands. Since I was the only operator, I worked all bands and all modes (CW and SSB). That kept me busy and was really a blast. One year I made over 1,000 contacts all by myself. That was fun!

Field Day is for all hams young and old. It works out pretty good. Us old timers need the youngsters to help with the physical work of setting up antennas. The youngsters need us old timers to teach them how to operate a contest effectively. Although I must admit, we have some very fine young operators now. I presume that is the result of participating in past Field Days.

This years Field Day is Saturday June 23rd and Sunday June 24th. As usual, we will set up antennas and equipment Friday, June 22nd starting at 2:00PM.

I hope everyone in the club will mark this date on their calendar and plan to join us. If you are not into operating in the Field, we always have a huge club picnic on Field Day Saturday late afternoon (to fuel us operators for the long evening). Last year courtesy of Club President Arlin Bradford, KD8EVR, we had an equally huge breakfast Sunday morning.

Mailing lists, blogs, and podcasts are good sources of ham info

by Dan Romanchik, KB6NU

Whether you're a newcomer or an old-timer, the Internet is possibly the best way to learn as much as you can about amateur radio. On the Internet, you'll find many, many ham radio mailing lists, podcasts, and videos. In essence, these resources give you access to hundreds, if not thousands, of Elmers. One mailing list that I always suggest to new hams is the HamRadioHelpGroup

http://groups.yahoo.com/group/HamRadioHelpGroup/

The purpose of this group is to help "those who are interested in getting started in Amateur Radio or upgrading their license." This mailing list has a good mix of beginners and experts, and most questions are answered quickly and correctly. One thing that I really like about this group is that the moderators do a good job of keeping the discussions on track, and will squelch them when they stray off topic or threaten to turn into flame wars. In addition to the HamRadioHelpGroup, you might also want to join a more targeted mailing list. For example, if you're interested in learning Morse Code (hint, hint), you might join the SolidCpyCW list

http://groups.yahoo.com/group/SolidCpyCW/

If you just bought a Yaesu FT-60 hand-held transceiver, you might want to join the FT-60 list

http://groups.yahoo.com/group/FT-60/

Chances are that no matter what your interest, there's probably a mailing list to discuss that

interest. I'm subscribed to a lot of amateur radio mailing lists and could probably spend most of my day just reading and replying to them. In order to get the most out of them, without them taking away from my on-air time, I only read those threads that I am really interested in, and even then, I quit reading them once they have started to drift off-topic. I also un-subscribe myself from lists that cover topics that I'm no longer interested in. Blogs, podcasts and videos In addition to getting on a few mailing lists, you might want to read a few blogs and subscribe to podcasts. These are also great sources of information about amateur radio. I blog about amateur radio at

http://www.kb6nu.com/

, and lots of hams find it a good source of information. You can find a list of other ham radio blogs that I'd recommend on my home page. Podcasts are also a good source of information. One podcast that you might want to check out is the Practical Amateur Radio Podcast

http://myamateurradio.com/

Since 2008, Jerry, KD0BIK, has been producing PARP, and currently has more than 50 different episodes online. For other podcasts, consult the list on Jerry's home page. Finally, there are literally thousands of amateur radio videos on the net. On YouTube alone, there are approximately 32,000 of them. The American Radio Relay League has its own channel

http://www.youtube.com/user/ARRLHQ

but perhaps the most popular amateur radio video channel is the K7AGE channel

http://www.youtube.com/user/K7AGE

K7AGE has more than 6,200 subscribers and his videos have garnered more than 2.1 million views! Whatever source or sources of information you select, remember to not let them take up too much of your time. Ham radio is about more than just reading, listening, or watching. It's about doing!

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When he's not answering yet another e-mail, Dan blogs about ham radio at www.kb6nu.com, teaches ham classes, and ragchews on 30m and 40m CW. You can e-mail him with comments or questions at cwgeek@kb6nu.com.

Treasurer's Report

May 4, 2012
for Jan 27 to April 30, 2012

Balance on 1-26-12:	$	2841.62
Income:		
Dues:	$	46.00
50-50:	$	45.00
Interest:	$	2.05
Donations:	$	
Expenses:		
none	$	
Balance on 4-30-12:	$	2934.67
Designated Funds:		
Year 2005 Repeater Fund:	$	513.39
Field Day Fund:	$	97.11
Communication Vehicle Fund:	$	471.04

Barry Butz N8PPF

MVARC

Mt. Vernon Amateur Radio Club
Minutes for the April 9, 2012 Meeting.

By Jeff Butz, N8PPF

Attendees:

1.	Don Bunner	KB8QPO
2.	Emery Bennett	W8TW
3.	Tom Evans	KD8HSA
4.	Mark Bisenius	AC8FV
5.	David Byrd	KD8RST
6.	Matt Ware	KD8PSK
7.	Steve Barr	KD8GRM
8.	E. Mike McCardel	KC8YLD
9.	Ruben Clark	KB2SAI
10.	Melinda Clark	KD8RZZ
11.	Larry Helzer DVM	AA8WP
12.	Scott Fields	K8AEC

13.	Jeff Butz	N8SMT
14.	Bart Hains	KD8LDT
15.	Brian Bernicken	KD8RZT
16.	Arlin Bradford	KD8EVR
17.	Don Russell	W8PEN

President Bradford opened the meeting at 7:08 P.M.

Treasurers Report: Don Russell, W8PEN

Checking Account:	$ 439.50
Savings Account:	$1092.37
CD's Total	$1378.78
Interest to Date	$ 2.03

EC Report: Ruben Clark, KB2SAI
We have had two bike events this past month that were successful. We also had the Skywarn Training last week with 26 participants of which about half were new people. The Earth Day Marathon is coming up on April 22, 2012. The Pelotonia bike ride to raise money for cancer is coming up on August 10-12, 2012. More information will be forth coming later. Ruben said he has ARES signup information so if anyone is interested see him after the meeting.

Tech Class Exam Report: Don Russell, W8PEN
The tests have gone very well, we had five students pass with the lowest score being 29 and one having a perfect score. Don thought barring the unforeseen he would hold the next class next January.

Field Day: Larry (Doc) Helzer, AA8WP
Doc said plans for Field Day are going well. It will be at Apple Valley again this year. The general consensus is that that is a great location. Doc said he would like to see a PSK31 station set up if that was possible.

Old Business:
Arlin mentioned that we received no negative comments from the Red Cross after last month's meeting. A motion was made by Emery Bennett, W8TW and seconded by Steve Barr, KD8GRM to investigate relocating the meeting location. The motion was passed by voice vote. A motion was made to have the May 14th meeting at the Mt. Vernon Fire Station at 7:00 P.M. The motion was passed by voice vote.

New Business:
No New Business.
The meeting was adjourned at 7:50 P.M.

Antennas For Sale

Danielle Jenkins, KG8FP, has for sale a butternut antenna, a 2 meter beam, and two sections of tower. If interested you can contact Danielle at 740-397-4140.

Radio-Activity

By Don Russell, W8PEN

Not much to report on this month. Just a few odds and ends and a few thoughts about plans for Field Day.

Remote Base:
The Remote base has been offline for a couple of weeks. This has sort of been unintentional, but no one has emailed me asking why it was down so perhaps it is not a big deal.

I was trouble shooting another computer and needed to use the monitor and router cable from the computer hosting the remote base and I just never got things back together. If and when I put the remote base back on line, I believe it will be a weekend thing only, running 24 hours per day Friday, Saturday, and Sunday.

I know not too many remote users have actually made contacts through the remote base, but I think it is interesting to be able to receive on the hambands over the internet. Perhaps I will change the operating mode from transmit and receive to just receive. Got to think about it.

Field Day:
Field Day is on the fast track and will be here before we know it. This year, like last year, I am thinking that we will run the 4A class. That is four transmitters allowed simultaneously. I may have more to report in the June Newsletter about this.

In the past, I have been the person to decide most

of the equipment and antenna issues. This always worked well because I was the most experienced in what it took to make lots of contacts on Field Day. This has changed over the past several years and we have many club members capable of organizing a station for Field Day.

From what I understand, Arlin, KD8EVR, has already been planning the 20 meter SSB station. He is planning on a 3 element triband beam. From what I understand he has a trailer with a tower that will go to 100 feet. Sounds impressive and I hope this comes to be. Should be a lot of fun on 20 meters for the SSB guys.

I would like to encourage this kind of thinking. Not that all stations need to have big antennas. I would like see one, two, or three hams assigned to setting up one Field Day Station. Since there will be three stations on SSB, that means we would need three different groups obtaining the radios and antennas for each Field Day station. Of course everyone will help set up antennas on Friday and I do have all my wire antennas from past Field Days that have been proven performers so no one will actually have to go out and find an antenna unless they want something different. Point is, I think it is time that other members of the club get involved in the technical aspect of Field Day. Yes, I plan on setting up the CW station.

This is something we should talk about at the May and/or June meeting. Just remember, the higher the antennas the better. Although personally, I think 100 feet is overkill, but I know the SSB guys are out to slaughter us poor CW operators.

See you at the meeting.

NEVADA BALLOON PROJECT

By Barry Butz, N8PPF

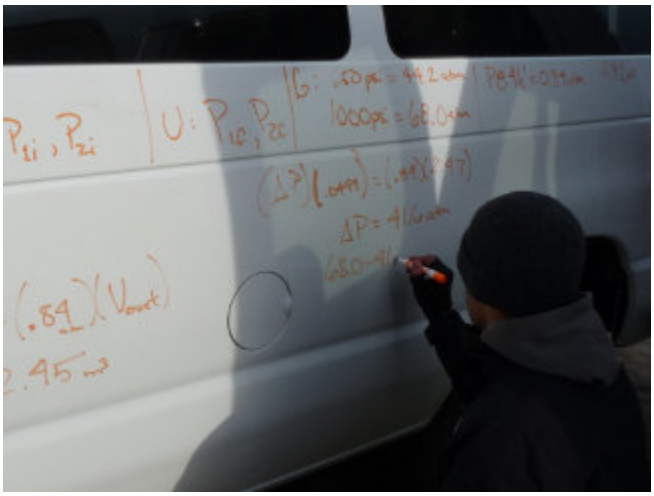
In April Connie KC8DLG and I joined the Bay School of San Francisco balloon team in northern Nevada for their third balloon project, named Ikaros III. We drove from sunny and warm Lake Mead near Las Vegas to the cloudy and cold middle of the middle of nowhere and set up camp at Rye Patch State Recreation Area. The campground is in a canyon just below a dam. We scouted for a suitable launch site and found one nearby on the plateau above the canyon. A couple hours later the team arrived in two white rental vans. The team included our son Craig KJ6DYP, his fellow teacher Feroze KJ6UTH, students Jesse KJ6VFJ and Nolan KJ6UIM, and six more enthusiastic experimenters. After setting up tents and cooking a pasta dinner, everyone went to bed early for a 5:30 wakeup.

The launch location was actually a last minute choice. The normal southwest winds favored a site further west, near Gerlach, on the edge of the Black Rock Desert. The hope was that the balloon would land on the salt flats of the desert and be easy to recover. There are web sites that forecast high altitude winds and predict the course a balloon might take. By doing last-minute checks on these sites, Craig decided to launch farther to the east because the wind was expected to be southerly and hopefully would lead to a landing between the mountain ranges.

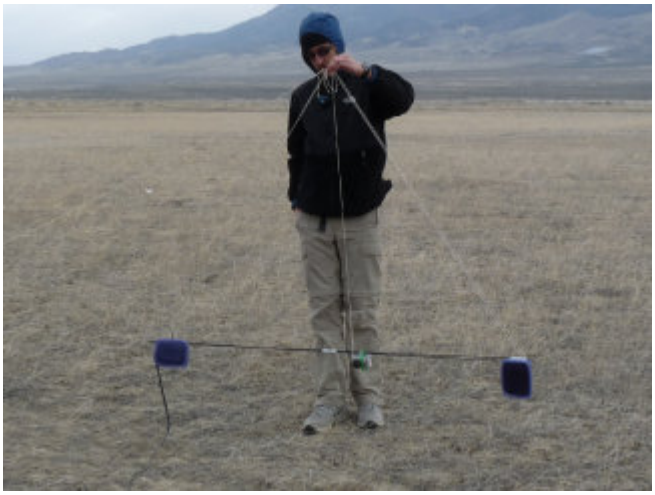
The weather forecast didn't look good, possible rain and wind, but in the morning the rain had held off and the wind was light in the campground. The school team packed their tents and gear. Since we didn't know where we'd have to drive, we left our trailer in camp and planned to return at the end of the day.

At the launch site the wind was pretty strong, about 10-15 mph. This could be a problem. The weather balloon is made of latex and is quite thin and easily damaged. We put a tarp on the ground under the balloon and everyone handling it wore gloves. We parked the three vehicles in line, trying to block the wind, which was partially successful.

Inflation began while the parachute and instrument package were laid out on the ground. In past launches, rapid rotation of the package led to dizzying videos. To combat this, the payload was divided into two containers separated by a five-foot boom. One end had the GPS/APRS transmitter and the other end had several cameras facing different directions. At the center of the boom was a high definition video camera.



As inflation neared completion the wind rose again, stronger than ever. We were getting worried. The balloon was thrashing around, threatening to puncture itself by hitting the ground. If it burst we had a spare but not enough helium to fill it. We disconnected the fill hose, did a final check of the instruments, and released it. Once free, it rose beautifully, rising until it disappeared into the low clouds, the parachute and instruments beneath.



During inflation the wind died down and things were looking good. Feroze did last-minute calculations to find the proper amount of inflation. Contrary to what you might think, less inflation will lead to higher altitude. This is because the balloon expands as it rises and bursts when it stretches to the maximum. So the idea is to use enough helium for good lift, but not more than necessary.

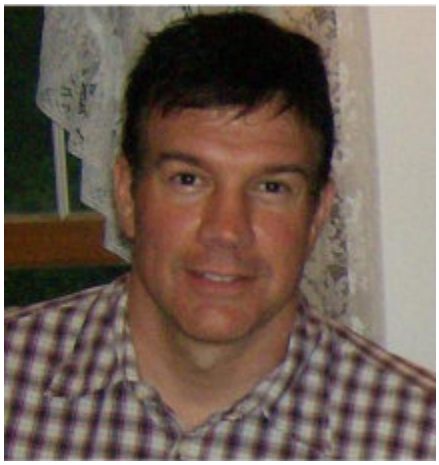
Now the rush was on to reload the helium and other gear into the vans and start the chase. The APRS transmitter reached ground stations that transferred the location to the internet, where it could be viewed on aprs.fi using smart phones. We started driving north and stopped at McDonald's in Winnemucca to use their wi-fi and restrooms. Along the way the three vehicles communicated on 2 meter simplex. The APRS signal was lost before landing when it went behind mountains. From the known course and speed, the team estimated a landing point. We drove on paved roads, then six miles on a gravel road, then three miles on a rough dirt track that led toa watering station for cattle.

From here we were able to pick up the APRS signal directly and find the landing site a half-mile away. Everything was unharmed and still working. The balloon had reached 96000 feet and traveled about 75 miles. Luckily it did go straight north and landed in the foothills, not in the mountains.

After the flight, the team returned to San Francisco, downloading data and pictures along the way, encountered snow at Donner Pass and had to buy chains for the vans. They had a great experience, learning about science, radio, programming, purchasing, publicity, design, and even about camping.

There is more information, including more photos and videos taken from the balloon, at http://ikaros.xrg.us/ikaros3/index.html

Aerial Platform for ATV



By Mark Bisenius, AC8FV

A fun application for Amateur Television (ATV) is to install a camera and transmitter in a remote control (RC) airplane.

The Multiplex EasyStar RTF (Ready To Fly) kit for $189.99 has everything you need to begin learning to fly, including a highly rated 3-channel RC transmitter.

Made of "Elapor" styrofoam with an impressive wingspan of 54", the EasyStar is an extremely stable glider design that is ideal for beginners, with extra lift for a camera and transmitter.

P. C. Electronic's 50mW Videolynx 434 ATV transmitter is just $99.

A $32 Diamond RH3 Mini HT BNC antenna connected to the transmitter will give you a half-mile range.

The 434 MHz signal can be received on any analog TV or VCR tuned to cable channel 59.

Add in a P.C. Electronics CG35A mini color camera for $89, and you're ready to pilot your EasyStar through the camera, which is known as FPV (First Person View).

The camera, transmitter, antenna, and a 9V alkaline or lithium battery weigh a total of 7oz, which will not kill performance, being well within the 32-45 oz. maximum payload of a stock kit.

You can upgrade to a $25 ArduPilot controller board paired with a $60 EM-406 GPS module, for autonomous flight via preprogrammed waypoints. Infrared X, Y, and Z sensors provide stabilization in place of a gyroscope.

Just be sure to keep the EasyStar within visual range per the FAA!

AFFILIATED CLUB NEWS

By Mike McCardle, KC8YLD

Fact is stranger than fiction. Never-the-less I always look forward to the April issues of club newsletters. It is so nice to know that the editors, as well as their submitters have a sense of whim. It's also good to see that we don't take ourselves overly-serious. I like to read April newsletters as if everything is fact and truth. It makes me feel good. It enables me to dream, and allows me to think outside the box. I start pondering "what-ifs"

The hobby is about having fun. The biggest lesson learned reading April newsletters is that amongst the serious stuff like Skywarn activations, SETS, VE testing, new rules for 60 meters, Constitution and By-Laws updates, Silent Key Announcements, and Ham classes are stories about purple squirrels, a presentation on building your own A-Bomb, articles on how to expand your wi-fi coverage by soldering a coaxial cable to your motherboard, Circle Path Progation antennae, and something called the Dracosonic AC001 Audio Catchers. In addition there are real happy announcements like Ham of the year awards, Special Service Club renewals, Club auctions, VHF QSO Parties, Fox Hunting, Kit building, etc.. We do a good job of being serious and having fun.

But what is fact and what is fiction. So many times it's all in the perception. Sometimes the only thing that separates fact from fiction is imagination and perspiration and time (and perhaps a heap of money). Just think what is fact now that may well have been perceived as fiction sometime during our lifetime. Space exploration? Personal Computers? Walking around with a phone in our pockets? Instantaneous worldwide communication without wires? WAIT! WE'VE BEEN DOING THAT!

We as hams have been doing this stuff how long?

50 years? 100 years? Hams have spent a lot of imagination and perspiration and time (and a heap of money), experimenting and leading the way in nearly all of these advancements. We are a resourceful bunch. In an age where so much is taken for granted, in which everyone seems to use a plethora of "black boxes" to make life easier, hams are still the original tinkers and the trend is growing. I want to challenge every group, club and individual to reach out and share their hobby with someone who is not a ham. More people are returning to trying to figure out how things work. More people are trying to build their own stuff. Reach out to them. Show them the "Facts" about how things work and how they are in the grasp of anyone interested. Consider taking a non-ham friend to a club meeting or to Dayton with you. Ham Radio is always more fun when shared. That is why clubs are such a vital part of our growth.

Speaking of Dayton. Dayton is not just a Hamfest. It is a Convention, a Seminar, a Symposium, a Makers Fair, a Discovery Center, and a Think Tank. Something for everyone. The Ohio Section will have a booth within the ARRL Section. Our cabinet will be making themselves available during Hamvention. I will also being spending a lot of time at the AMSAT booth so look for me one place or the other. Come look us all up. Ask us when we can speak to your club. Stick a pin in the state map showing where your club is. I hope to meet and rekindle many new friends this year.

Until next month, Get out of meeting mode.

73,
E.Mike McCardel, KC8YLD
Ohio Section Affiliated Club Coordinator
kc8yld@arrl.net

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 are prorated for new members at the time of application. Visit our Web Page at www.mvarc.net

Dues Schedule: $12 regular

$10 for second member in the same family, for those over 65 yrs. of age, and for those living outside Knox County

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)_____E-Mail_____

Extra Donation (Optional)_____

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

If yes please enter password_____

Other Comments: