

The Mount Vernon Amateur Radio Club Newsletter

MVARC Mount Vernon, Ohio 43050

November, 2015



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



Hello everyone, just spent the last week in Louisville holding the newest addition to our family, Marianna. She is doing great. Of course while I was there I got to put in a tub surround. Not sure if they wanted me to see the baby or ... anyways, hope all is well at your shack. I'm sure a lot is happening with you also.

I'm sure that most of you have heard about Jim's (N8IBR) Mom passing away about a week ago. She will be missed for sure and our condolences go out to Jim and his family for their loss.

If you missed last month's meeting, well what can I say. You missed a great one. Jim N8IBR discussed the ARRL's Radiogram form and the ICS 213 form. Both the Radiogram and the ICS 213 are important forms to be familiar with for passing traffic during a disaster. Look them up on the web and refer back to back issues of our newsletter where Jim wrote a 3 part article concerning the use of the Radiogram. You never know what to expect at our meetings. We had a surprise visit from none other than Scott Yonally, N8SY. He is our ARRL Section manager.

You need to visit his web page, <http://www.arrl-ohio.org/default.html>, as he has a ton of information there.

One thing that he pointed out was the need for us to be informed and if so moved contact our government officials concerning the Amateur Radio Parity Act of 2015. At the bottom of his page he has the latest details concerning what is happening with this bill. Make sure you check out this page often as he adds to it.

One last thing, as we work on preparing ourselves to be able to help out in times of need in the Knox County area, or anywhere really. We need to make sure we have the knowledge and credentials necessary to help out the different organizations that we will need to work with. I have listed below the four courses needed. They are free (well, as long as your time counts for nothing) and online. I suggest that you work on these over the next year as time permits. As you complete each one you will be tested over the material and once passing that test you will be issued an electronic certificate save it. It is very important that you save this document as it is the proof that you have taken the course and will be needed to participate in some of the exercises in the future. Oh, by the way, Scott said that they are working on having four exercises next year. Let us know that you have taken and passed the course as this information will be especially useful and needed when we work with organizations like our EMA (?) here in Knox County.

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

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

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

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

I'm done, if you have made it this far I hope to see you at the November meeting (Nov. 9) at the Red Cross Training Building. We should have a report from the election committee as to who will be running for officers next year and you would not want to miss that!

Frank, KC8EVS



Nov 4 @ 5:00 pm Dinner at the Southside Diner, South Main St

Nov 6 @ 10:00 am Breakfast at Hardee's on Coshocton Road

Nov 8 @ 9:00 pm ARES Sunday Night Net on the **K8EEN**

Repeater

Nov 9 @ 7:00 pm Mt. Vernon ARC meeting at the Knox

County Red Cross Training Center, 300 North
Mulberry Street, Mount Vernon

Nov 11 @ 5:00 pm Dinner at the Southside Diner, South Main St

Nov 13 @ 10:00 am Breakfast at Hardee's on Coshocton Road

Nov 14 @ 9:00 am Breakfast at Allison's Finer Diner

Located at Coshocton Rd and Gilchrist Road

Nov 15 @ 9:00 pm ARES Sunday Night Net on the **K8EEN**

Repeater

Nov 18 @ 5:00 pm Dinner at the Southside Diner, South Main St

Nov 20 @ 10:00 am Breakfast at Hardee's on Coshocton Road

Nov 22 @ 9:00 pm ARES Sunday Night Net on the **K8EEN**

Repeater

Nov 25 @ 5:00 pm Dinner at the Southside Diner, South Main St

Nov 26 **HAPPY THANKSGIVING**

Nov 27 @ 10:00 am Breakfast at Hardee's on Coshocton Road

Nov 29 @ 9:00 pm ARES Sunday Night Net on the **K8EEN**

Repeater

Dec 2 @ 5:00 pm Dinner at the Southside Diner, South Main St

Dec 4 @ 10:00 am Breakfast at Hardee's on Coshocton Road

Dec 6 @ 9:00 pm ARES Sunday Night Net on the **K8EEN**

Repeater

Dec 9 @ 5:00 pm Dinner at the Southside Diner, South Main St

Dec 11 @ 10:00 am Breakfast at Hardee's on Coshocton Road

Dec 12 @ 9:00 am Breakfast at Allison's Finer Diner

Located at Coshocton Rd and Gilchrist Road

Dec 13 @ 9:00 pm ARES Sunday Night Net on the **K8EEN**

Repeater

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Meeting called to order by President KC8EVS at 7:02 pm

16 Members and 1 Guest present.

Motion to approve September minutes made by KD8HSA, 2nd by KC8UR. Approved.

Motion to approve October Treasurers report made by N8PPF, 2nd W8TW. Approved.

Guest Scott Yonally, N8SY was introduced.

President's report

KC8EVS discussed club contest activities, such as the recent North American QSO Party, Ohio State Parks on The Air, and the upcoming November ARRL Sweepstakes . He stated that many members expressed to him their hope that these types of activities would continue.

He then stated that the Muskingum Valley Regional Boy Scout Council had contacted him, and updated him on the Regional BSA Jamboree to be held in our area next June.

He advised that a renewal of our site lease on the water tower for the 146.79 repeater was in the works.

He stated he would look into a Christmas Party location.

He ask if any members had participated in the Simulated Emergency Test October 3rd and 4th.

A few members stated they had participated in the activity.

Old Business

Repeater report, W8PEN, stated that all appears well at this time.

W8PEN reported that 2 important MESH Node sites will hopefully be up and running soon. He also stated that there may be some additional Node sites available to us. It will probably be next year before anything major happens.

New Business

W8PEN reported he has numerous pieces of equipment from the estate of AA8WP, and he would compile a list and get with the membership on its availability for the membership to acquire items. He also stated that there were still numerous antennas and other materials that needed to be removed from the estate.

Discussion on the need for headsets for the GO BOXES was held. After lengthy discussion, a motion was made by N8PPF, and 2nd by W8PEN to spend \$400.00 on Headsets with Boom Mikes for both go boxes was made and approved. KD8HSA will handle these purchases.

KE8ANV advised that he and a few other folks would be operating the upcoming October Boy Scout Jamboree On The Air from Camp Otter Run. He stated they could use additional members help if they were available. Numerous members volunteered to help.

Motion to Adjourn made by KB8QPO, 2nd KE8ANV. Approved 8:10 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

N8IBR Secretary MVARC



By Don Russell, W8PEN

Morse Code Class

See the announcement about the upcoming Morse Code Class elsewhere in this issue.

I have always preached the advantages of Morse Code as a communications mode. Narrow bandwidth means many signals can occupy a small segment of a frequency band, no need for a computer, simple transmitters and receivers. One of the major advantages of CW and its narrow bandwidth is the power factor. SSB is 2.5KHz wide while CW is 100 Hertz. Maybe 150 Hertz. This narrowness is a major power boost. Imagine a garden hose wide open. Sure, plenty of water is coming out (Power). But it won't spray very far. Now, use the nozzle to narrow the opening and what do you get? A very narrow stream of water that sprays a much greater distance than when wide open. Same amount of water but a more powerful flow. Same in radio. The narrower the bandwidth, the stronger signals for the same amount of power.

This is never so evident as when I do contesting. Most of you know I prefer CW contesting over SSB. There is a reason. My station is a pretty modest setup. 100 watt transmitter into wire antennas. Actually for the last several years just one wire antenna.

On CW, I can break DX pileups in a contest pretty regularly. Usually one, two, or three calls and I am in their log. During a DX contest on SSB however, I call and call sometimes and never get the contact. Very frustrating. I also experience this to a lesser degree during domestic contests. Ones where I only have to work United States and Canada stations. I am really effective on CW during these contests. I do okay on SSB too, but not to as great a degree. I have limited success on 20, 15, and 10 meters. 80 and 40 meters I can do really well.

So, if you are into Dxing or DX contesting, perhaps you should take the time to learn Morse Code. It is a fun mode that requires minimal equipment and power. Join us on Tuesday nights starting November 17th and find out what you are missing.

The Antenna Factor

Some of our club members interest in contesting has sort of rekindled my interest. For the last several years I have been a part time contester, meaning I just work a contest until I am tired or bored with it. The only contest I was putting a serious effort into was Field Day with the club.

There are several contests I wish to put a serious effort into this fall and winter: The November Sweepstakes CW, The CQ World Wide DX contest CW, The November Sweepstakes SSB, and the ARRL 160 meter Contest (my favorite CW contest). There are several other contests in January and February that I am interested in too, if I don't get burned out from the first few mentioned. Hey, winter is long. Contesting gives us something to look forward to.

So, with the contesting season upon us, I put up an 80 meter loop antenna this past week. I am hoping that this antenna will give me an advantage on 80 and 40 meters. Even though I do really well on these bands anyway, I feel that changing antennas when the rate falls may put my signal into a new area and get the rate back up. I am also hoping to put a more effective signal into the higher population areas on 20 and 15 meters with the loop.

Radio Activity, continued on page 5

I have tested this antenna with a few contacts and it seems to be working pretty good. I am even thinking of laying a wire on the ground under it to create a better cloud warmer.

For the DX contest, I am thinking about putting up a 10 through 20 meter ground plane antenna. These antennas are suppose to be great for DX. My plan is to have three wires running down my tower. One for 10, one for 15, and one for 20. Then one or two radials. Either that or I might try just a vertical dipole.

That is what being Radio-Active is all about. Experimenting, trying new antennas and other things.

[The BBHN Mesh Network](#)

Looks like we are making some headway with the local Mesh Network. Arlin, KD8EVR, is going to get a Mesh Node on his tower before winter sets in. We are also hoping for the same at the water tower where K8EEN/Repeater is located. Then next spring, we may have two more sites available. The work is never done.

See everyone meeting night. Have fun being radio-active.

[Contesting for Fun](#)

By Barry Butz N8PPF

I had the idea of starting a newsletter column about contesting. As it happened, Don W8PEN had the same idea and started this column a couple months ago. Our hope is for other hams to also contribute to the effort by writing once in a while. I know there are capable authors out there and we would like to hear your views and experiences.

My contesting began in 2006 when I was a Technician. I had already realized that the 6-meter band can have some amazing long distance propagation. I entered the ARRL and CQ VHF contests in June and July and found I really enjoyed them. Later, after upgrading my license, I started operating HF contests. They were just as much fun. Now I work about a half-dozen a year. I don't expect to get in the top ranks of contesters but often finish around the middle of the pack, maybe a little higher. My goal is to improve my score over my previous year's.

Our club always enters the most popular contest of all: Field Day. This year's results have just been announced. We did really well - #243 of 2720, in the top 9%. I love Field Day, the hard work, the camaraderie, and the chow!

Another contest the club worked was the Ohio State Parks on the Air. Although the results haven't been announced, I think the tally was 93 parks. I tried to join in from North Carolina. I heard several parks but couldn't contact any of them. What was the matter? When tearing down I realized the reason. The radio had the RIT turned on so I was transmitting on a different frequency than receiving. Oh well, that's the way you learn.

Recently a contesting team has been formed known as the MVARC Contesters. The idea is that all their scores are totaled and are scored as a team as well as individually. Five of us entered the CQ Worldwide SSB contest in October. There were varying degrees of success but everyone enjoyed it. This is an open group and I hope more will join us. You don't have to be an expert; the rest of us aren't.

A good place to find upcoming contests is QST's Contest Corral. It lists many contests for most weekends. There are domestic and international ones, special interest and general interest ones. Some major ones this month are the CQ Worldwide CW and the ARRL CW and SSB Sweepstakes. The Sweepstakes is one I haven't yet entered but I'm planning to give it a try. It has a more complicated exchange than I'm used to so that might be a challenge.

Remember, we need contributors for this column. I've just about used up my knowledge. 73.

**Announcing the Second Annual
Morse Code Training Class**

November, 2015

I have had a lot of interest in club members learning Morse Code. Many have asked when the next Morse Code Class will be. Well, the time is now.

The second annual Morse Code Class will be held beginning Tuesday, November 17th at the Red Cross Training Center. Classes will be held on six consecutive Tuesdays, ending Tuesday, December 22. I am hoping that these dates will avoid interfering with family holiday schedules.

Classes will held from 7:00 pm through 9:00 pm.

The object of the class will be to teach students to learn Morse Code at a speed suitable for “on the air” communications.

Besides the two hours each Tuesday, students should be committed to practicing Morse Code 15 – 30 minutes per day on their own. Practice is the only way to learn Morse Code.

We will be using a program called “Just Learn Morse Code”. This program can be downloaded before the class begins at:

<http://www.justlearnmorsecode.com/>

It is hoped that all students have a home computer that they can use to practice on. If you have a laptop, by all means bring it to class.

**A New Heathkit!
So, why am I not excited?**

By Dan Romanchik, KB6NU

A couple of weeks ago I got an e-mail from Heathkit. Yes, the NEW Heathkit. you might remember that a couple of years ago, there was all this hype about a “new” Heathkit and how they were going to start designing new kits as well as revive popular old designs. Then, nothing. They went completely quiet - until a couple of weeks ago.

In an e-mail sent to their “insiders,” they say:

[New Heath Kit continued on page 7](#)

Dear Heathkit Insider,

'What I really hope Heathkit will produce,' a Silicon Valley colleague recently told me, 'is a new radio kit with a beautiful finish, maybe in rosewood.' Something great to enjoy building and learn from, and also visually stunning, so he could put it in his living room and keep it forever.

Today, my friend gets his wish.

They then go on to explain all of the work they've been doing in relocating Heathkit to Santa Cruz, CA, acquiring a second company, and securing all the intellectual property rights to the old Heathkit manuals and logos (meaning no more bootleg copies on the Internet).

The e-mail continues:

"That's a lot, but there's more. We've designed and developed a wide range of entirely new kit products. We authored the manuals for these kits, complete with the beautiful line art you rely on, preserving and respecting our iconic historic Heathkit style. We developed many new inventions and filed patents on them.....We built the back office infrastructure, vendor and supply chain relationships, systems, procedures, operations methods, and well-thought-out corporate structure that a manufacturing company needs to support its customers, to allow us to scale instantly the day we resume major kit sales. All this effort enables us to introduce a fleet of new kits and helps ensure Heathkit can grow, prosper, and continue to bring you great new products for a very long time."

So, what's the exciting news? A new QRP transceiver? Maybe a shortwave radio? A new 100-in-1 experimenter kit for Makers?

Uh-uh. Sorry. The "exciting" news is a tuned radio frequency (TRF) AM band (yes, I said AM band) radio kit that costs \$150 <https://shop.heathkit.com/shop/product/explorer-jr-trf-am-radio-receiver-kit-black-case-gr-150-bk-16>. Not only is that crazy expensive for an AM radio, it doesn't even come with a speaker. On top of that, there's no soldering. You screw all of the components to the board. I'm speechless (well, figuratively, not literally).

I'm not sure what the target market is for this product. It's certainly not amateur radio operators, who expect a lot more (in terms of both functionality and "fun") for their money. Nor is it the "Maker" folks, who want something more challenging than an AM radio. I think that if I took this to show off at the local Ann Arbor Maker group, they'd laugh me out of the place.

I really hope that they have something better up their sleeves. A strong Heathkit would be good for the Maker movement and for ham radio.

By Don Russell

Saturday, October 17th found local club members Terry Windsor (KE8ANS) and Don Russell (W8PEN) helping Ed Liddle (KE8ANU), also a club member, set up a couple of stations for JOTA, the Scouts “Jamboree On the Air” in its 58th year of activity.



During JOTA, scouts talk to other scouts around the world via ham radio using digital and voice modes. It is a world wide scouting event that introduces ham radio to those most important to us: Children who will eventually carry on our ham radio tradition. Sure, most of the scouts will not give ham radio a second thought. Maybe in a few years, something will come up that will remind them of their ham radio experience during JOTA and they will become interested in getting licensed. Happens every day.

The scout group we set up for was the Cub Scout Pack 634. They were camping out for the Bobcat BBQ/camp out at Camp Otter Run in Logan County. Age of the scouts were between 8 and 11 years old. We had an outside shelter with power and a few trees. The scouts were camping out overnight. Terry and I, being not so brave, left around 5:00PM. But a lot happened between 10:00AM and 5:00PM

Yes, it was October and we were outside. Another “Chill to the bone” day for us club members. Balance that out with how much fun we had and I would say it was worth it. Ed says: Heated indoors next time please!



[Jamboree continued on page 9](#)

Seriously, this was an amazingly successful event. Some of the local hams set up a packet station and Budpole antenna. Ed set up his HF station with a vertical antenna and a 2 mtr FM station. Terry and I used the clubs FT-890 and an 80 meter window antenna. We also set up two Morse Code learning posts in which the scouts were taught how to send their names and other such things in Morse Code.

The digital station had limited impact on the day. Very few scouts if any wondered over to see what was going on. This is really a shame because it could have been a big hit if done properly. The biggest problem was that they were using a Netbook computer with a 9 or 10 inch screen. Way to small to stand back and watch what was going on. Therefore, the operator was the only one that got to talk to scouts on the other end. Next year, I would like to see a 26 or 32 inch TV set up so scouts can sit back and watch what is happening. Then, have one operator and one other ham that explains what is happening on screen. An extra keyboard would be nice so that scouts can type in their own messages. This keyboard could be placed on a separate table back far enough so the scout can see the big screen. Done in this way, the digital station could have been a big hit. I plan on checking out how other JOTA stations run their digital station.

The digital station did have to deal with a lot of interference from the other stations. A bit more planning before hand could have avoided a lot of this. We successfully avoid interference such as this each Field Day.

The station Terry and I set up was on SSB and we had a lot of success..... Until the smoke rolled out of the transceiver! Yes, we got a radio that needs some work done on it. I believe the problem to be in the antenna tuner.

Eventually, we went to Ed's radio, which played really well. The vertical antenna was not doing to good, so we hooked the 80 meter window to the radio and our fortunes were uplifted. I think every scout there got to talk to someone over the air. The parents were as thrilled as the scouts were.

The 2 meter radio also played a huge role in the event. Plenty of contacts by the Scouts were made there too. Both on simplex and through the Marysville repeater.



The Morse Code training was a big hit also. These scouts learn Morse Code pretty easily and some were sending whole sentences from a book with very little difficulty. Ed's sons Jackson and Nathan played with the Morse Code most of the day. I think we got a couple of up and coming CW ops for Field Day in the makings.

Overall we had around 30 scouts participate and I could not be happier with how the day went. With some planning, JOTA could be a real boost in our club activities and we should find a local pack to do this with (sorry Ed.). I will bet we could set up in the **WARM** Red Cross Training Center!

