



Ham Radio Rock!

The Mt. Vernon Amateur Radio Club

October, 2008 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
Wednesday Night Social Net at 9:00 P.M. on the KD8EVR Repeater**

NVIS For Your club

From the ARRL Club Letter, September 2008

Near Vertical Incidence Skywave (NVIS) is a propagation mode which uses high angle radiation to send signals almost straight up to be reflected back to Earth for very effective short to medium haul communications. NVIS uses a no skip zone making reliable communications effective for a range out to 500 miles. No special equipment is required to create high angle radiation. The NVIS propagation mode works on frequencies below 10 MHz because these high angle radio waves are reflected back to Earth rather than absorbed by the atmosphere as with higher frequencies. Often a low dipole is all that is needed to accomplish reliable communications within the no skip zone. Because of the reliability of communicating within this range and no need for infrastructure or third party support such as repeaters or satellites, NVIS is an excellent choice for emergency communications and for staying in contact with friends in nearby locations.

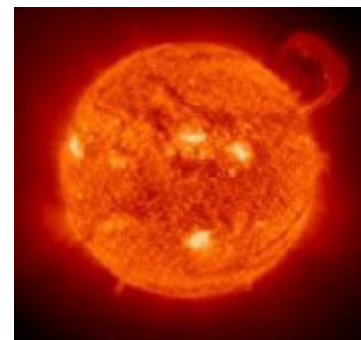
NVIS is an excellent topic for a club meeting and clubs can get extra mileage from the NVIS topic by incorporating an antenna project and on air activities among the members. The ARRL Multimedia Library has several Power Point programs that can be used by your club for meeting programs. These programs are free to download and use at www.arrl.org/multimedia >.

One of the programs in the library presents NVIS fundamentals, its advantages and techniques on how to deploy NVIS in the field. Use this program at your club meeting as a presentation and discussion of the high angle propagation technique.

After members are knowledgeable about NVIS future meetings can incorporate a hands on project where club members build antennas to use for NVIS operation. The multimedia library has an marvelous Power Point with a project for building a NVIS antenna for the 40, 60 and 80 meter amateur bands. This program is well illustrated, easy to follow and uses readily available materials. Because the NVIS technique is effective for short to medium distances club members can gather on the air and compare signals and other aspects of NVIS.

With all of the recent tropical storms and hurricanes in the Southeastern United States radio amateurs employed NVIS techniques to get messages out of effected areas. The propagation mode works well with SSB and with digital modes including Winlink 2000. Because antennas for NVIS do not have to be mounted high, a complete antenna package including coax and support poles and antenna can be packed into a duffel bag ready to be deployed whenever and wherever needed.

If your club is looking for an informative and entertaining meeting program that can be expanded to other activities then try Near Vertical Incidence Skywave.



Club Celebrates 50 Years with ARRL

This month marked the MVARC's 50th year of affiliation with the American Radio Relay League. To obtain and maintain affiliation, a club needs to have over 50 percent of its club members also members of the ARRL. To do this for 50 years is certainly an accomplishment that shows the dedication of our members to the future of ham radio. Where would ham radio be without the ARRL protecting our interests? This Editor encourages club members who are not already ARRL members to join up and support your hobby.

Early in the year, Don Russell, W8PEN, suggested that the club put something together to celebrate this event. Don suggested simply to set up a special event station at some site, or simply have members sign up to run a special event station from their home base using the club's K8EEN call sign. A schedule could have been made up so no one was on the same band at the same time, and everyone could do this event from the comfort of their own home.

It was decided that the club should do more than what was suggested. We should indeed set up a special event station. We should also throw a party and picnic in celebration of the event and even make it an all night affair.



Mike McCardel, KC8YLD at the controls

Dick Huggins, N8RDH, volunteered his QTH as the location of this event, and members quickly accepted his offer.

So, on July 27, 2008, MVARC members invaded Dick's QTH. The Special Event Station was to begin at noon, so Don, W8PEN, was the first to arrive with his "Field Day Antenna Box". The antenna was quickly put in the air using the old heavy object on a string thrown over the highest tree limb available technique. This took several tries. Even had to add a bit of weight to get the string up where we wanted it. In the end, the antenna was up with an apex of about 40 feet. One side dropped down to 6

feet, and the other end was about 20 feet. Looked like a good antenna set up to us!

The radio was set up inside one of Dick's sheds. The largest one. Very comfy. Everything was ready to go with 15 minutes to spare.

President Mike McCardel, KC8YLD, has shown up to help with the last leg of the antenna and to set up the equipment. He carried in the two batteries we used for the radio. Yes, we could have run off commercial power, but it is more fun to test the batteries once in a while. Get a feel for how long they would last if needed in a more serious situation.

I believe Larry "Doc" Heltzer, AA8WP, was the next to show up. He delivered some goodies, but had to go out on a call or two and came back later.

Long lost club member Phil Bubble was the next to show up. After a big effort to talk him in. Phil brought pictures of past club activities, so the group got caught up in the pictures and revisiting some of the club's history. This was interesting.

Mike, KC8YLD, was the first one running the Special Event station. The antenna must have been high enough, because contacts were easy to come by and signal reports were very good. It didn't hurt that 40 meters was in about as good a shape as it has been in for a while.

The picnic was a blast. There was plenty of food and drink, and lots of friendly conversation to be had. Hats off to Susan Huggins and her great hospitality. The ham was excellent, and the beans incredible. Susan also kept coffee pot full, which was very much appreciated.



50th Year Cake

Mike supplied the "celebration cake" which was in the form of a Collins KW-2 mobile unit from 1957 vintage. That was 50 years ago! Good job Mike.

The Special Event Station was run periodically, but most entertaining was the non stop conversations on just

about any subject imaginable.



Don Blizzard, W8UMH

Although the event was supposed to last all night long, I think everyone was gone by 11:30 P.M. to get some well deserved sleep before returning in the morning to finish operation of the Special Event Station.



Larry Heltzer, AA8WP



Great Food!

Breakfast was served up by Doc and Susan. Again, we did not go hungry. Eggs, Bacon, toast, and a host of other goodies.

Too quickly, Noon Sunday came and all operations were shut down. It did not take long to pack things up and head home.

Thanks, Dick and Susan, for hosting this event. Perhaps we can do it again next summer just for fun.

MVARC

**Mt. Vernon Amateur Radio Club
Minutes for the September 8, 2008 Meeting.**



By Jeff Butz, N8SMT

Attendees:

1	Don Bunner	KB8QPO
2	Ruben Clark	KB2SAI
3	Jeff Butz	N8SMT
4	Larry Helzer, DVM	AA8WP
5	Dick Huggins	N8RDH
6	Don Russell	W8PEN
7	Tony Spiegel	KC8UR
8	Steve Barr	KD8GRM
9	Jerry Pittenger	K8RA

President McCardel formally called the business meeting to order at 7:15 P.M.

Treasurer's Report: Dick Huggins, N8RDH

630.90	Savings Account
536.09	CD
750.54	CD
155.16	Checking Account

No Reports this month.

Old Business:

Don Russell mentioned that the Boy Scout Merit Badge Challenge in Coshocton is this weekend. It starts at 9:00 A.M.

Steve Barr KB8GRN is a new member of the club.

Our ARRL 50th Year Anniversary at Dick Huggins', N8RDH,

House is from noon to noon on September 27-28, 2008. Radios, antennas and food were discussed. We will start setting up about 11:00 A.M. "ish" A motion was made to write a check for \$100.00 for Doc, AA8WP to buy food. The motion was carried by voice vote. The rental of a porta-potty was discussed; Dick Huggins said he would investigate.

New Business:

No new business.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:46 P.M.

The speaker this month is Jerry Pittenger, K8RA from Powell, Ohio who is going to talk about the Iambic keys he makes and sells. See his website at WWW.K8RA.COM

MVARC

**Mt. Vernon Amateur Radio Club
Minutes for the August 11, 2008 Meeting.**

Attendees:

1	Don Blizzard	W8UMH
2	Don Bunner	KB8QPO
3	Barry Butz	N8PPF
4	Jeff Butz	N8SMT
5	Tom Evans	KD8HSA
6	Mike McCardel	KC8YLD
7	Don Russell	W8PEN
8	Tony Spiegel	KC8UR

President McCardel formally called the business meeting to order at 7:15 P.M.

The Minutes of the July meeting were read by Secretary Butz, N8SMT, and approved as read.

Treasurer's Report: Barry Butz, N8PPF

Last Month's Interest: \$0.02

Income: 1. Field Day Donations: \$120.00
2. We received a donation from Columbus Outdoor Pursuits in the amount of \$300.00

Expenditure: Field Day Expenses: \$95.06

Total Repeater Fund: \$684.94

Total Field Day Fund: \$133.24

Grand Total: \$2405.63

Repeater Report: Don Russell, W8PEN

The Repeater is working fine.

Old Business:

50th Year Anniversary at Dick Huggins', N8RDH, House is from noon to noon on September 27-28, 2008. President McCardel said he was looking for a picture of an old radio. Don Blizzard, W8UMH, said he had one. He is also looking for old club event pictures so if anyone has some to let him know.

New Business:

No New Business.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:32 P.M.

Vote Early and Often

By Dan Romanchik, KB6NU

Three years ago, I ran for Vice Director of the ARRL's Great Lakes Division. I showed up at hamfests and club meetings, handing out flyers and pressing the flesh. I lost that election, but I'm running again this year. I have some ideas that I think will make ham radio better, and while I am currently working on many of these, I'm hoping that being on the ARRL's Board of Directors will help me be more effective in my work.



I'm not going to make this column a campaign piece, though. If you want to know where I stand on a particular issue, or more about my qualifications, go to my website, www.kb6nu.com or contact me directly, and I'll chew your ear off. Instead, I thought that I would talk about the ARRL's organizations and how we elect our ARRL representatives.

The ARRL has split the country into 71 sections and 15 divisions. Each division contains a number of sections. The Great Lakes Division, the division in which I reside, consists of the Michigan Section, the Ohio Section, and the Kentucky Section. Each of those sections covers the entire state, but many states, such as New York and California, contain several sections.

Each section has a section manager, who is responsible for directing the section's field organization. The field organization includes the state's emergency communications organization, official observers, and traffic networks. The section manager is elected by the members in a section and is responsible only to the section's members.

On the other hand, each division elects a director and a vice director to serve on the ARRL's Board of Directors.

These folks are responsible for setting the policy of the ARRL. The director is the one who actually gets to vote. The vice director is there to stand in for the director, should he or she be unable to make a board meeting, or to serve as director, should a director become incapacitated or resign for any reason. Directors and vice directors have no authority over section managers, although as you might expect, they often work closely together on matters affecting the sections.

There are fifteen divisions. Each division holds an election every three years, and the elections are staggered so that every year there is an election in five divisions. This year, elections are being held in the Atlantic, Dakota, Delta, Great Lakes and Midwest Divisions.

If you are in one of those divisions, I hope that you will look for the ballot that will show up in your mailbox (if it hasn't already), read the candidate's statements, and vote for the one that you think will do the best job. Make your voice heard!

When he's not running for the ARRL Board, Dan blogs about ham radio at www.kb6nu.com and is working on getting a ham radio station up and running at Ann Arbor's Hands-On Museum (www.aahom.org/wa2hom). You can e-mail him at cwgeek@kb6nu.com or look for him around 7030 kHz working CW.

Boy Scout Merit Badge Challenge a Success

The Boy Scout Radio Merit Badge Challenge proved to be a successful event. Those helping out were Mike McCardel (KC8YLD), Larry "Doc" Heltzer (AA8WP), Dick Huggins (N8RDH), Don Bunner (KB8QPO), and Don Russell (W8PEN).

This was an important event for the club. It was the first time anyone local had actually participated in the teaching of the radio merit badge, and frankly, none of us knew exactly how it was going to turn out. We were a bit relieved that it was not expected to teach the whole thing in one sitting, so that took some pressure off. Although, in the end, it turned out that it was hoped each boy scout participating would earn his merit badge that day.

KC8YLD and W8PEN were the first to arrive at the site. We were to set up at a sheltered site, so at least the rainy weather would not be a huge factor in the day. There was one G5RV antenna already in the air, but it was very low to the ground. Ten to fifteen feet. The first thing to go up was the club's Field Day 30 foot antenna mast. There was a flag pole at the site with no flag on it, so we used it as the base, and simply tied the antenna mast to the flag pole. Did not need guy wires. It was pretty stable. Up went the antenna. The ends came

down to about the seven foot level. Just high enough to keep the antenna out of harms way (for the antenna and the scouts!). That was easy.

We had just about 15 minutes before the Scouts arrived. Just enough time to seat up the radios. Actually, we did not make it in time, but we were close. We were using W8PEN's FT-847 and KC8YLD's FT-857. Both really good radios for such an event.

Since the Scout arrived before we had everything set up, Don started explaining things as he went along. Hinting about how much fun ham radio was. The difference between ham radio and an internet chat line were discussed too.

After getting the rig set up, W8PEN started the instruction stage of this challenge while KC8YLD finished his equipment set up. We had no hi-tech solution to the course. We had prepared some print outs copied from a Power Point program that was found on the internet. It was actually pretty good, and carried us a long way.

Next came some on the air demonstrations. First, W8PEN demonstrated copying Morse Code with a live station (Find me a slow one Mike!). Then we made several contacts on 40 meter SSB to Alabama, Pennsylvania, and North Carolina. Each Scout (there were six of them) was allowed to join in on the conversations. I think this was really exciting for the kids. After these contacts, Morse Code was tackled. Each Scout was able to key his name in with the straight key, and then again with the electronic keyer. This really impressed the Scouts and I think was the highlight of their activity. They really found the Morse Code part interesting.

KC8YLD then took over for more of the instruction phase of the challenge. This brought us up to noon and lunchtime.

N8RDH and AA8WP had shown up before lunch, so we were preparing for the afternoon. Found out it was indeed hoped that we would get through the entire merit badge course. Actually, the afternoon was a piece of cake. Three of the required sections of the course were of the "do one of these three sections". One pertained to Broadcast Radio, One Pertained to Ham Radio. The other I think pertained to Business Radio. Of course, we chose the Ham Radio Section. Not having to teach the other two sections saved lots of time.

AA8WP, N8RDH, KC8YLD, and W8PEN each contributed to the afternoon session. This session varied from drawing a map of frequencies and listing all the important bands, including TV, Business, and Ham Radio frequencies, to properly filling out a radio log. We also tore apart one of the antenna tuners so the Scouts could locate certain electronic parts to go along with their schematic symbols that had been learned. They also got

to play a little bit more on the Morse Code Keys. Seemed like every time we took a break, someone was trying to send Morse Code.

The end came too soon. All the Scouts passed the Merit Badge Challenge. The Instructors came away with a very enjoyable experience, and much information on how to do a better job of it next time.

Radio Activity

By Don Russell, W8PEN

I like to write about the positive things our club does. There are times, however when something needs to be said. The views expressed in this "editorial" are my views only, and apparently not the same as the majority of our club members as discussed during our Event celebrating 50 years affiliation with the ARRL.



On September 14, 2008, Mt. Vernon and Knox County witnessed a very serious weather related incident. Some are calling it a wind storm. This storm was the residual effects of Hurricane Ike, which battered Galvestone, Texas and surrounding areas. Hurricane force wind gusts of up to 75 Miles Per Hour were seen though out Ohio, including Knox County, lasting at least nine hours. After witnessing this, I can not imagine what a sustained 110 Mile Per Hour wind would be like, as was the case in Texas. Thankfully, this writer received minimum damage. Most serious was the tri-band antenna twisted on the mast, and just needs pointed in the right direction. Yard clean up is a pain. I am on my sixth truckload of brush, but nothing serious. No big trees down or anything. Certainly, ones heart has to go out to the people down South.

It is well known to most members of our club that our Knox County ARES (Amateur Radio Emergency Service) has not been accepted as a viable alternative or back up communications to many agencies in Knox County. Knox County FEMA in particular has generally ignored our efforts to be included in drills or planning. I have listened to club members complain about this ever since I rejoined the club in the mid 1990's after a long absence. From an earlier event that I witnessed, I would tend to agree with this assumption.

It has just been in the last few years that we have obtained a working relationship with the Knox County American Red Cross. We get to have meetings in their Annex building, and have held several ham classes and testing sessions there. We have done two Field Day events from that location too. In return, we promised to

help provide communications for the Red Cross when requested to do so.

To this end, it is my belief that we have failed to live up to our obligation. Give credit where credit is due. Ruben Clark (KB2SAI), and Jeff Hall (KC8WXL), worked with the Red Cross during the day and evening. Ruben had stated that the Red Cross would really like to have a ham present at the Red Cross building during this time. I am sure many Knox County hams were monitoring the frequency, including me. There were no offers of assistance from anyone out there, again, including me. To be clear, Ruben did not ask for volunteers. I think a fairly accurate quote would be: "The Red Cross would really like to have a ham present."

I have no excuse myself. I chose not to volunteer to help out. Yes, my power was out too. But I had the generator going and my family was out of harms way (meaning Darlene and all our animals!). As I said, I had minimum damage to worry about.

My point is, If we continually complain about not being asked to help; and then turn down the one chance to prove ourselves worthy of consideration, what are we complaining about?

I think one club member out of our group of forty (Jeff is not a club member) is pretty pathetic! Ruben should have been the one to be at the Red Cross Headquarters, directing several mobile units to do the Red Cross's bidding. Sorry Ruben, you are the Knox County Emergency Coordinator, you should be directing, not doing the field work. But you really had no choice.

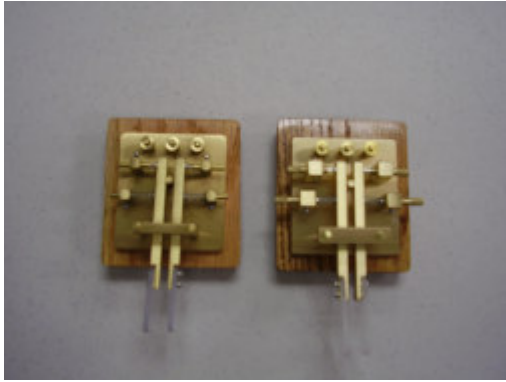
Our ex EC, Bob McBride (N8QPM) and I actually talked about this once. We do a very good job of weather spotting when we are needed. Bob claimed that the National Weather Service actually wanted our help, so he was going where we were wanted. He concentrated on the important service of weather spotting and did not worry about the other agencies. I am beginning to believe he had it right.

It is the opinion of this writer that this club needs to put up or shut up. Next time, lets not disappoint.

September Program: Don't get caught up the creek without a paddle!

Jerry Pittenger, K8RA, from Powell, Ohio was the program guest for the September meeting.

Jerry designs, builds, and sells solid brass iambic key paddles. Several designs were displayed, along with amusing stories of the history of these keys and some details as to the thoughtfulness and design that went into his keys.



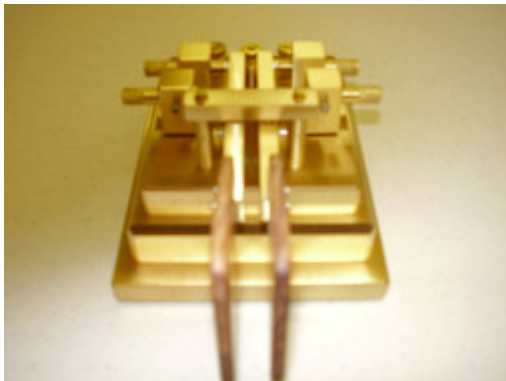
The audience was very impressed with the paddles. For a CW op, these are the ultimate paddles. They would make a great Christmas gift (hint hint).

To check out Jerry's line of paddles, check out his web page at: <http://www.k8ra.com/>.

Just out of curiosity, I checked the reviews on these paddles at <http://www.eham.net/reviews/detail/2387>.

The average rating on these paddles was 4.9 out of 5. Now, that is pretty good. I just had to see who rated these paddles lower than a five! Sure enough, there were two reviews that gave the paddle a 1 out of 5. The rest gave the paddle a 5 out of 5. Now that was 15 pages of reviews. Something like 50 reviews.

I would say they are certainly worth the price for one who enjoys conversing in Morse Code. Heck, it is a nice piece just to having sitting on the operating table whether you use it or not.



MVARC Club Meeting is Monday October 13, 2008 at 7:00 P.M. in the Red Cross Annex Building, 300 North Mulberry Street, Mt. Vernon, Ohio. There has not been a program announced as of this writing. If the trend continues though, we can look forward to something interesting.

Please remember the long running Sunday Night ARES net at 9:00 P.M. Please note the change in time, which was effective May 4, 2008.

Also check out the new UHF net on the KD8EVR Repeater. This net runs each Wednesday at 9:00 P.M. This is a social net. Please join us for the fun of it.

Note: This net has not been too successful yet. However, we will continue to run this net with the hope of more activity in the fall and winter months.

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. Family and friends welcome. You do not need to be a ham or club member to participate in this event.

Come join MVARC club members every second Saturday of the month for breakfast. Each month we try a different place, so check the MVARC Newsletter for current information. Breakfast Coordinator Arlin Bradford, KD8EVR, can also be contacted for the latest news on the 2 meter or the 440 Mhz. Repeaters. Or tune into our ARES net each Sunday at 8:00 PM for current information.

******The next Breakfast will be October 12, 2008 at 9:00 AM at Ryan's Steak House, 1515 Coshocton Ave. , Mt. Vernon, Ohio.******



Jerry Pittenger, K8RA
(Photo from his bio at <http://www.qrz.com/callsign>)

Mt. Vernon ARC Officers

President: Mike McCardel, KC8YLD	kc8yld@arrl.net	Phone: 740-599-6614
Vice President: Arlin Bradford, KD8EVR	arlinb@vasucom.com	Phone: 740-427-2440
Secretary: Jeff Butz, N8SM	Jaylynn@copper.net	Phone: 740-965-9368
Treasurer: Barry Butz, N8PPF	n8ppf@mvarc.net	Phone: 740-397-7540

Newsletter Credits

Editor: Don Russell, W8PEN

Clip Art and Cartoons thanks to http://wm8c1.50megs.com/radio_clip_art.htm, <http://www.qsl.net/k4adl/>, http://pages.prodigy.net/kg0zz/clipart/ham_art3.htm, <http://www.arrl.org/>,

The ARRL letter is a weekly e-mail publication by the ARRL. You may read the entire ARRL letter by visiting the ARRL Web page at <http://www.arrl.org/>. **Other News** from: <http://ky4ky.com/fyi.htm>.

The ARES E-Letter is an e-mail digest of news and information of interest to active members of the ARRL Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES). Past issues of The ARES E-Letter are available at <http://www.arrl.org/ares-el/>. Issues are posted to this page after publication.

Project OSCAR is a monthly column written for Newsletter Editors. Columns will appear as space permits. You may download all the columns yourself at: <http://www.projectoscar.net/beacon.php>

Members are encouraged to send articles pertaining to ham radio, with an emphasis on local activities, equipment reviews, and personal experience to w8pen@arrl.net or Don Russell, W8PEN, 815 Brookwood Road, Mt. Vernon, Ohio 43050