



The Mt. Vernon Amateur Radio Club



September, 2010 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)



Ham Radio Rocks!

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

MVARC

Mt. Vernon Amateur Radio Club Minutes for the July 12, 2010 Meeting.



By Jeff Butz, N8SMT

Attendees:

- | | |
|----------------------|--------|
| 1. Jeff Butz | N8SMT |
| 2. Don Blizzard | W8UMH |
| 3. Don Bunner | KB8QPM |
| 4. Larry Helzer | AA8WP |
| 5. Kevin Adams | KD8NGV |
| 6. Ruben Clark | KB2SAI |
| 7. Charles Fisher | KB8NGP |
| 8. Arlin Bradford | KD8EVR |
| 9. Mark Bisenius | AC8FV |
| 10. Austin Godber | KD7NMS |
| 11. Barry Butz | N8PPF |
| 12. Tom Evans | KD8HSA |
| 13. Steve Barr | KD8GRM |
| 14. Tony Spiegel | KC8UR |
| 15. Michael McCardel | KC8YLD |

President Bradford opened the meeting at 7:11 P.M.

The next meeting of the Mt. Vernon Amateur Radio Club will be September 13, 2010. at 7:00 P.M. in the Red Cross Annex Building, 300 North Mulberry Street, Mt. Vernon, Ohio. As of this writing, no program has been announced. We have many items to discuss for upcoming events. One of particular interest will be organizing a Fox Hunt (Transmitter Hunt) scheduled for October 9th. Check latter in the Newsletter for details.

Please remember to check into the long running Sunday Night ARES net at 9:00 P.M. on the K8EEN 2-meter Repeater.

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

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 September 11, 2010 at 9:00 AM at Allison's Finer Diner, 11587 Upper Gilchrist Road, Mt. Vernon, Ohio****

Ohio State Parks on the Air, 2010

The annual Ohio State Parks on the Air contest will be Saturday, September 11, 2010, from 1600 UTC to 2400 UTC. The prime purpose of the contest is to promote public awareness of ham radio. The second purpose is for everyone who enters to have fun.

Portable and mobile stations, individual or club will operate from as many of Ohio's 75 state parks as possible. Forms and all official information, are on the OSPOTA web page at:
<http://parks.portcars.org>.

OSPOTA is sponsored by the Portage County (Ohio) AR Service.

Help Needed With Scouting Event

A few months ago we were looking for a youth event. Well it just dropped from the sky.

Date: April 16th weekend. (Saturday)
Event: The Muskingum valley Council Spring Camporee "its a disaster"

Estimated # of youth: 300 youth + adults

Where: MVSR Muskingum Valley Scout Reservation - in Coshocton (near Conesville) Just south of Rosco Village

Event description: The morning will be training situations where the boys will react to a mock emergency. In the afternoon they will be given much more indepth situations and asked to respond. We are looking at about 30 different emergency sites. Someone is even working on an airplane disaster. A plane flies over then someone sets off charges and smoke in the backwoods. The scouts are supposed to be the first responders.

The muskingum Valley council covers Knox, Coshocton, Tuscararus, Muskingum, Gernsey, Morgan, Nobel, and Perry counties. So there are a lot of resources to call on.

We are in the planning stages of the event but we are looking for:

1. hams to participate by being with a group and acting as the communication or the call for help.
2. Maybe we can have EMCOMM1 there to act as a communication hub and to do demonstrations.
3. Any contacts for government emergency people that would be able to participate and do demonstrations? Or setup the Mock disaster? I know many of the fire people can't take the equipment out of the county but the trained people could participate.

Jon Penko KD8LFI
Scoutmaster Troop 377 - Mt. Vernon

Treasurers Report: Barry Butz, N8PPF For the Month of June:

Income:

Interest	\$ 3.51
Dues	\$10.00
Donations	\$6.00
Special Field Day Donation	\$125.00

Expenses:

Postage Stamps	\$88.00
Insurance	\$75.00

Balance: \$2855.40

Secretary's Report: Jeff Butz, N8SMT

Last months minutes were approved as read.

EC Report: Ruben Clark, KB2SAI

Ruben just wanted to express that he thought we had a real great field day exercise.

Field Day Committee: Doc Helzer, AA8WP

Doc thought we had a great field day, with great participation. We have food left over so we will have a cook out sometime in the future.

It was discussed to give a donation to Apple Valley because of the great treatment they afforded us during Field Day. Mike McCardel made a motion to donate \$150.00 to Apple Valley. Tony Spiegel seconded it and the motion was passed by voice vote.

Mike McCardel reported that we had 1514 contacts, which is 33% more than last year. We had 686 CW contacts, which is 37% more than last year. He will include a larger report in the newsletter.

Old Business

Emergency Communications Vehicle: Arlin Bradford, KD8EVR.

The Vehicle has been at First Friday's twice now and the reception from the public has been great with a lot of interest.

New Business:

No new business

A motion to adjourn was made by Barry Butz, N8PPF and Seconded by Larry Helzer, AA8WP and was approved by voice vote.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:55 P.M.



Treasurer's Report

Sept 1, 2010

for Aug 1 to Aug 31, 2010

Balance on 8-1-10: \$ 2708.03

Income:

Dues: \$
Donations: \$
Field Day Donations: \$ 37.00
50-50: \$

Expenses:

Field Day donation to Apple Valley: \$ 150.00

Balance on 8-31-10: \$ 2595.03

Designated Funds:

Year 2005 Repeater Fund: \$ 364.94
Field Day Fund: \$ 18.25
Communication Vehicle Fund: \$ 540.18

Barry Butz N8PPF

Anyone interested in owning a Vibroplex Bug from 1968? I have one for sale. It is in excellent condition and has hardly ever been used. I still have the original BOX and it comes with a plexiglass dust cover. I don't want a lot of money for it but don't want to give it away either. I will even be willing to consider a trade for something of equal value.

Tony R Spiegel, KC8UR
Mount Vernon, Ohio
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From Weavers Words,

September 4, 2010

Great Lakes Division (GLD) members recently received requests to support two legislative initiatives in the US Congress. The first of these requests was specifically related to Amateur Radio. It asked Ohio members to write letters to Ohio's US Senator Voinovich requesting that Amateur Radio mobile activities be excluded from restrictions under national distracted driving laws. The request was for letters to Sen. Voinovich, only, because of his membership on the Senate Committee that is considering these bills. This series of requests went to

each state that has a senator on the Committee. Depending on the progress of this legislation, we all may be asked to write to our US senators at a later date.

The second request is not so obviously related to Amateur Radio. It asks members throughout the Division to write their US Representative and US Senators to include an expanded increase in tax deduction for mileage driven while supporting the work of non-profit organizations. Although an increased deduction would benefit amateurs as well as non-amateurs, it is probably not the type of legislation that pops into our minds when we think of Amateur Radio..

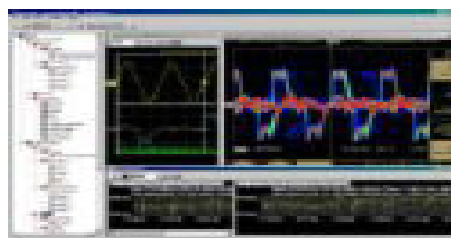
The point of this note is that ARRL has become much more active at the grassroots level than in the past in advocating for legislation that favors Amateur Radio. This is true whether the benefit is direct or indirect. Involvement of individual members by following through on requests for letters, for phone calls or for personal visits to legislators is key to the ultimate success of these legislative activities.

It is commonplace for us as individuals to be skeptical that "our" letter will do any good. This is an understandable reaction in modern society. On the other hand, letters from individual members in other organizations are firmly accepted as benefiting their cause. Possibly the best example of this is the National Rifle Association (NRA). Highly restrictive gun laws are few in this county, partly because of the responsiveness of individual NRA members to requests they contact their legislators about legislation.

It is true there are more gun owners in the US than radio amateurs. What this really means is that we hams need to work together even more closely than larger organizations to be heard as a strong, unified voice. When we individual hams come together for a cause we can and will be successful.

Please join the ham chorus when you are asked to make your voice heard.

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ARRL - The national association for Amateur Radio



Radio Activity



By Don Russell, W8PEN

2 Meter Repeater:

No doubt everyone has heard that the club's 2 meter repeater is down at the present time. The problem is not a repeater issue. The repeater is fine. The city of Mt. Vernon is doing a total refurbishing of the water tower where the repeater is located. I understand that we will be allowed back in once this project is completed.

Actually, I consider this very encouraging because the last I had heard, the water tower was scheduled to be taken out of service in a few years. That left the future location of our repeater in question. I for one, do not want to lose such a good site as the water tower. It has served us well for many years. We have always had good communications during public service events and weather spotting events due to the prime location of our repeater. Looks like the water tower is going to be there for a while.

Arlin Bradford (KD8EVR) and I are planning on taking advantage of the situation and do a little maintenance work and some improvements to the repeater, which is currently located at my house.

We are planning to retune the duplexer, which is the filters that allow the receiver and transmitter to operate from the same antenna without interference. This has not been done for a while, and may improve receive performance somewhat.

Addition of a 100 watt amplifier will also be done. We are planning on running the amplifier at 50 watts. Currently, the repeater has been running 25 watts. Perhaps the increase of power will fill some holes in the county, especially out East.

There is also the possibility of adding a receiver preamp. We have done this in the past, however, the receiver is pretty sensitive as it is, and improved receive performance by using a preamp has been questionable. I have come up with a few ideas that may help in this endeavour. We will just have to try it and see what happens. The worst thing that could happen would be to find out that the receiver is so hot that we do not need a preamp. That would be a good thing.

In the mean time, Arlin has come up with a solution that keeps our 2 meter repeater frequency active. Arlin is using two Yaesu FT-800's as cross band links to his UHF repeater. One transceiver is set to receive signals on 146.190 Mhz and retransmit them on 442.100 Mhz (the input frequency of Arlin's repeater, KD8EVR/R). The other transceiver listens to the KD8EVR repeater's transmit frequency of 442.100 Mhz and retransmits this signal to 146.790 Mhz. Thus, any signal transmitted on 146.190 Mhz is retransmitted on 442.100 Mhz and 146.790 Mhz. Any signal being picked up on 442.100 is also retransmitted on 442.100 Mhz and 146.790 Mhz. Sounds more confusing than it actually is. The simple fact is that we have a 2 meter and a 440 Mhz repeater tied together. One can use either repeater and be heard on both. It works and works well. Just not as good as when the 2 meter repeater was on the water tower. It will be nice to get the original repeater back up and running.

That being said, it has been great to be able to link both repeaters up like this, especially during our Sunday Night ARES net. One can check into the net on either repeater. Arlin and I are talking about adding a link from the 2 meter repeater to the 440 repeater that can be brought up during the net, during emergencies or for a public service event. I think it would be a big plus to be able to do so and suspect that it will happen. This will not be a permanent link, but one that can be accessed via a radio keypad.

440 Mhz Echolink:

Another issue has had an effect on the KD8EVR repeater (440 Mhz). Due to some technical difficulties, the Echolink on the 440 Mhz repeater has been off line for about a week. The laptop I was using became unstable. I believe this to have been caused by a virus that originally infected one of my other computers and spread through my wireless link.

This laptop is a very old, but reliable computer that is limited to Windows 98 and runs pretty slow. It has done an excellent job as my Echolink computer, however, Win98 Antivirus programs are hard to find these days so I was not running one.

The only way to rid myself of this self-inflicted virus was to reformat the hard drive and reinstall Windows 98. This has been done and the computer is ready to be put back in service. I also found an antivirus program that will run on this old laptop, so the problem should not rise up again. But you never know.

The hold up is that I was wanting to use another computer I acquired which is much faster than this old laptop. To get rid of any crud that was left on this computer by the previous owner, I once again reformatted the hard drive and reinstalled the software (once again, Windows 98). Everything was looking pretty good on it until I discovered that the soundcard

was not working on this computer. Funny, it was working before I reinstalled the software! Try as I might, I have not been able to get the soundcard working.

Back to plan A. I should have the Echolink back up on the KD8EVR repeater in the next couple of days using the old laptop. I will continue working on the other computer though. I think it would make a better Echolink server than the laptop. The laptop could then serve as a backup.

That is it for now. See you at the meeting.

Announcing the 2010 Fall Fox Hunt

By Matt Sturgeon, KD8NGT

A fall foxhunt has been scheduled for October 9th. The hunt will begin after a 9AM breakfast at Allison's Finer Diner located at 11587 Upper Gilchrist, Mount Vernon. I anticipate the start time to be on or slightly after the 10 o'clock hour depending on how quickly everyone finishes their breakfast. The details of the contest will be settled at the September club meeting. Clear your schedules because this is going to be an exciting foxhunt!

GIS Mapping for the HAM

I frequently utilize maps as a professional and as an individual. Likewise, whether maps are used to determine the distance and bearing of a far away station or to view terrain for a local fox hunt, I seldom meet a HAM that is not proficient with a map.

I would like to share some free products to which I have been introduced: Quantum GIS and ESRI (Environmental Science Research Institute) ArcGIS Online. Both products are Geographic Information Systems (GIS), in that one can input, manipulate, and output geographic information. For example, have you ever needed a map with specific features that is not commercially available? How about a Knox County map that includes nothing but roads, townships and topography? This can be created through a very simple GIS function. Simply input the geographic data into the GIS, create the map and save your work. Much more advance manipulation of geographic data can also be accomplished with experience, equipment and training. Map data is widely available online to suit the basic user's needs. (Hint: Most counties post their map data on their websites for free downloading!)

Quantum GIS is open source software. It has a very intuitive graphic user interface and it is backed by a user forum with solutions to any problem that you may come across. This software runs on Linux, Unix, Mac OSX and Windows. Quantum GIS can be downloaded at:

<http://qgis.org/>.

My first experience with this software was to map fire hydrants in my hometown. As a layperson, I was able to gather the waypoints of each fire hydrant with a Garmin Nuvi GPS, download the waypoints from the GPS onto my PC and overlay those locations onto a street map layer. This simple process created a concise map that certainly would not have been available otherwise.

The second product, ESRI's ArcGIS Online is web based version of ESRI's widely used and expensive ArcGIS software. This product can be accessed simply by navigation to:

<http://www.esri.com/software/arcgis/arcgisonline/index.html>

Try it Today. A user can choose a base map and then create layers from data accessed on the web or from a know GIS server to build a map. If you register of a free account you can save up to 2GB of work and upload your own data. ArcGIS Online is complimented by a myriad of other functions supported by ERSI.

I highly recommend checking out these free products. There is also a vast amount of other free GIS products available online. With the wide scope of functions that these product offer in combination with our club members ingenuity, I am certain that we will be able to apply these tools with tremendous results.

FCC Modifies Amateur Rules to Allow Participation in Disaster Drills

From the ARRL Letter, September 2, 2010

In a Report and Order (R&O) released Wednesday, July 14, the FCC amended Part 97.113 to allow amateurs to participate without an FCC waiver in government-sponsored disaster preparedness drills on behalf of their employers participating in the exercise. The FCC also has amended the rules to allow employees to participate in non-government drills and exercises up to one hour per week and up to two 72-hour periods during the year.



"Experience has shown that amateur operations can and have played an essential role in protecting the safety of life and property during emergency situations and disaster situations," the FCC noted in the R&O. "Moreover, the current Amateur Radio Service rules,

which permit participation in such drills and tests by volunteers (ie, non-employees of participating entities), reflect the critical role Amateur Radio serves in such situations. However, as evidenced by recent waiver requests, state and local government public safety agencies, hospitals and other entities concerned with the health and safety of citizens appear to be limited in their ability to conduct disaster and emergency preparedness drills, because of the employee status of Amateur Radio licensees involved in the training exercises. We therefore amend our rules to permit amateur radio operators to participate in government-sponsored emergency and disaster preparedness drills and tests, regardless of whether the operators are employees of the entities participating in the drill or test. We find that extending authority to operate amateur stations during such drills will enhance emergency preparedness and response and thus serve the public interest.”

In order to allow participation in non-governmental disaster drills -- such as those sponsored by ARES® or private hospitals -- the FCC will now allow amateurs employed by an agency participating in such a drill to participate up to one hour per week. In addition, they may also participate in up to two exercises in any calendar year, each for a time period not to exceed 72 hours. “This time limitation, which is consistent with the timeframes contained in the waiver requests filed with the Commission, should serve to further ensure the use of Amateur Radio for bona fide emergency testing,” the R&O stated. “We emphasize that the purpose for any drills we authorize herein must be related to emergency and disaster preparedness. By limiting the purpose in this manner, we further ensure that such drills will be appropriately limited.”

In amending the Amateur Radio rules, the FCC reiterated that it does not intend to disturb the core principle of the Amateur Radio Service “as a voluntary, non-commercial communication service carried out by duly authorized persons interested in radio technique with a personal aim and without pecuniary interest. Rather, we believe that the public interest will be served by establishing a narrow exception to the prohibition on transmitting amateur communications in which the station control operator has a pecuniary interest or employment relationship, and that such an exception is consistent with the intent of the Amateur Radio Service rules.”

The effective date of the R&O is to be determined and will be at some time after its publication in the Federal Register. A more detailed story will be forthcoming from the ARRL.

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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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