December 2025

Mount Vernon Amateur Radio Club

CQ CQ CQ

Serving Greater Knox County, Ohio

Orders at 5:00 pm

Service at 6:00 pm

Officer Nominations

Michael, KE8HGE

Slate of Nominations

Officer Nominations for 2026

President: ..... Roger Gorrell (KE8ICI)
Vice-President: ... G. Michael Jacobs (KE8HGE)
Secretary: ..... Darlene Pudlinski (WS8W)
Treasurer: ..... Terry Windsor (KI8N)

Directors

Barry Butz (N8PPF), second 2-year term
Emory Bennett (W8TW), first 2-year term

Current Directors returning next year

Scott Yonally (N8SY), 2nd year of second term
Evan Koontz (KF8APC), 2nd year of first term
Tyler Sheets (K8RTS), 2nd year of first term
Frank Counts (KC8EVS), stepping in as Chairman

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MVARC ARES Sunday Night Net

Mount Vernon 146.790 repeater

Check-in starts at 9:00 pm

Unable to access the repeater from where you are?

We are on IRLP (EchoLink) K8EEN-R Node 809800

Presidents View

Frank, KC8EVS

This column marks my final message as your President in the newsletter. As I write, it appears that Roger, KE8ICI, will be stepping in as the next President. I am excited for new leadership and am committed to offering Roger my full support as he takes on this important role.

Our next meeting is scheduled for December 14th at Bob Evans. During this gathering, we will officially vote in the new officers and share a meal together. I am looking forward to seeing everyone there, especially after the enjoyable event we had last year.

The next event on our calendar is Winter Field Day. Roger has generously offered his very warm garage as our operating location for the event. Winter Field Day is always an enjoyable time, much like our Field Day held in June. Whether you participate for a short while or stay through the night, everyone is encouraged to join in the fun.

As always, we depend on our members to step up and organize these events throughout the year. Field Day requires the most effort to organize, but there is usually plenty of help to ensure its success. Please mark these dates on your calendars and do your best to attend as many activities as possible. Let's stay involved and keep our club "radio active."

Sincerely,

Frank KC8EVS

Winter Field Day	January 24-25
NVIS Day	April 25
ARRL Field Day	June 26-28
Boy Scouts	TBD
Mount Vernon First Friday	August 7
OSPOTA	September 12
Centerburg Old Time Farm Festival	September 26-27
Club POTA	TBD

Meeting Minutes

Terry, KI8N

Call To Order

The October 2025 meeting of the Mount Vernon Amateur Radio Club was called to order by President Frank, KC8EVS at 10:00 AM. There were 12 members in attendance.

There was one correction noted to the November Newsletter; Miscellaneous Rambling – It was Kevin, KD8NGV at the POTA event instead of Nathan as the newsletter stated.

Minutes of the Last Meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved as presented in the Club Newsletter without objection.

Treasurers Report

Terry, KI8N reported on the finances for October 2025. There were no additions or corrections, and the report was accepted as presented. Motion by Roger, KE8ICI and Jim, KD8IZT.

Committee Reports

- **ARES**

Tony, KE8OOE reported on the weekly exercise texts are being replied at 90%.

Tony participated in the statewide SET exercise which simulated the following:

- All communications were down
- ARES members sent in status via Winlink and HF

Tony designated Roger, KE8ICI as the point of contact due to his being able to hear and communicate with all members via VHF simplex. He advised all members to check in via VHF simplex if phone service is disrupted for over one hour.

Tony stated we need to work on responses to Knox County storm alerts by opening weather nets and members checking in. He has not heard a weather net opened for any storm alerts.

Tony is going to resend his SET Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) to all members via email.

- **Repeaters**

Roger, KE8ICI reported the 2-Meter and 70 CM repeaters are working well. He is planning to adjust the squelch and look into possible drop outs.

- **EchoLink**

The EchoLink system is located and continues to operate well at Don's QTH, W8PEN.

- **Directors**

Director's report by G Michael Jacobs, KE8HGE. Officer elections at the December meeting. Current nominees are:

President: Roger, KE8ICI
Vice President: Michael, KE8HGE
Treasurer: Terry, KI8N
Secretary: Open

Directors: Barry, N8PPF, Emery, W8TW

Old Business

The POTA event at Mohican was sparsely attended and we made 51 contacts. Kevin, KD8NGV made his first ever HF contacts.

New Business

There was a lengthy discussion about how to publicize MVARC events so the public knows what we are doing. Evan, KE8APC the PIO is working on ideas to get the word out, but he needs the info about each event ahead of time.

Winter Field Day to be at Roger's home January 24 and 25.

Don is proposing an Open House for the public during the ARRL DX contest March 7 and 8.

Roger, KE8IC to check on Christmas dinner/meeting at Bob Evans for December 14.

MVARC will continue to meet on Saturdays through March 2026.

Jim, KD8IZT said he went to MARCS Hamfest at the MAPS Museum and thought it was larger than last year. He noted the MASH hospital display at the museum caught fire and was destroyed.

The raffle for the ARRL Handbook was won by Darlene, WS8W.

Meeting adjourned, motion by Roger, KE8ICI and Terry, KI8N.

Present at the November Club Meeting

Frank, KC8EVS	Michael, KE8HGE	Tom, KD8HSA	Jim, KD8IZT	Barry, N8PPF
Roger, KE8ICI	Don, KB8QPO	Evan, KF8APC	Don, W8PEN	Tony, KE8OOE
Darlene, WS8W	Terry, KI8N			

2026 Membership Dues

Club dues run from January 1 to December 31. Regular membership dues are $20.00. Dues are $15.00 for those over 65 years of age, additional members in the same family, or people who do not hold an active FCC amateur radio license.

Mount Vernon Amateur Radio Club
812 Coshocton Avenue
PMB #145
Mount Vernon, Ohio 43050

Name: _____ Call Sign: _____

Street or PO Box: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ License Class: _____

Email Address: _____

ARRL Member (Y/N): _____

Radio Activity

Don, W8PEN

Wishing everyone “Happy Holidays”!

Along with the holidays, this is contest season. From November through March is when all the major contests are held. That’s not to degrade the numerous State QSO Parties held throughout the summer. Those are fun and keep the bands active. But the major contest “fill the bands”!

I know there are a lot of hams that don’t like contesting. I can’t seem to get motivated for most contests. However, contests do serve a purpose.

What better way to find out where your station needs improvement. What better way to improve your operating skills. Just ask any contester how difficult it is to control a frequency by calling CQ. It takes a little experience to call CQ efficiently. But if you are going to do well in a contest, you must learn this skill.

Contesting skill spills over into Emergency Communications and traffic handling.

I remember the first time I tried to call CQ during Field Day. My brother Chuck (AC8R, SK) and I were working together. We had Searched and Pounced most of the day and we were not finding many stations left to work. I was the more experienced contester but had not attempted to CQ in any contest. So, I send out a “CQ Field Day”. Two stations came back to me……. And I froze. I was in shock and lost those two contacts because I just couldn’t do it. Went back to Search and Pouncing.

The point is, there are a lot of stations that just won’t CQ during a contest. If one does not CQ, then he will miss all those stations.

To wrap this little story up, I realized I needed to learn the art of Cqing. I did this by starting with State QSO parties where the action was not as intense as during Field Day.

It didn’t take long to learn this skill. You just have to force yourself to stick with it.

Guess I got sidetracked there.

Back to contest season. I missed the ARRL Sweepstakes CW contest. Most members know that CW is my favorite form of contesting.

I did get in the ARRL Sweepstakes SSB contest. But I couldn’t stick with it. Only worked maybe two hours and made 66 contacts. In my younger years, I would work 20 to 24 hours of the Sweepstakes, both CW and SSB. I no longer have the energy to do so.

That being said, my favorite contest is coming up the first week of December. The ARRL 160-meter contest. I have had more fun in this contest over the years than any other contest, except for Field Day.

One year, I placed in the top 10 of US operators at the low power level. 860 some contacts. You would not think one band would support that many contacts, but the hams above me were well above 1,000.

A few years ago, I decided to try QRP in the 160-meter contest. I made 370 contacts using QRP and CW. I thought that was amazing.

The ARRL 160-meter contest is a 48-hour event. I usually operate heavily the first night, Friday. Then Saturday night is slim pickings, but if you want to compete, you need to work both nights. I don’t try to compete anymore. I just operate as long as I am having fun.

So, this contest is one I am looking forward to this year.

Another contest I like is also a 160-meter contest in January. This one has separate contests. One for SSB and one for CW. I stick with the CW contest, but the SSB contest is probably just as fun.

Other contests of interest would include Winter Field Day, ARRL DX contest, North America QSO Party, CQ WPX contest. Something almost every weekend.

To keep abreast of all the contests, I use the WA7BNM Contest Calendar located at:

WA7BNM Contest Calendar: 12-Month Calendar

If you are an ARRL member, upcoming contests are listed in the latest QST magazine. The ARRL also publishes the "Contest Journal", which members can download the current and all back issues for free.

On another subject, the EchoLink System is working quite well. At least I have not heard any complaints lately. I tend to ignore it because it is working so well. Members should contact me if they find EchoLink acting up. Usually just a reboot of the computer fixes any issue.

Last, I decided to try my hand at a little story telling. I found that I was not too good at it. Terry, KI8N, had mentioned using Artificial Intelligence (AI) called Goblin Tools. Home - Goblin Tools . I checked it out but decided Windows 11 had something similar in "Copilot".

So, I wrote the first part of my story and then let Copilot look at it and make it better. I thought Copilot did a nice job on it. The story is called "My Adventures in Ham Radio" With the help of Copilot, I have written six chapters so far. The first three chapters should be elsewhere in this newsletter.

The story is of my true-life experience, as accurate as my old brain will allow. Some call letters are made up, simply because I can't remember. However, my three calls and my brother Chucks three calls are accurate.

Hope you enjoy the story.

See you at the meeting.

MVARC Calendar / Events

WEEKLY EVENTS

Sunday: 9:00 PM ARES Sunday Night Net
Wednesday: 4:45 PM — Dinner at Southside Restaurant
Friday: 9:00 AM Breakfast—McDonalds on Newark Rd.

CLUB Christmas Dinner

Sunday December 14th at 5:00 PM
Bob Evans Restaurant
1624 Coshocton Ave.
Mount Vernon, OH

Ham Radio Contest Calendar

ARRL Sanctioned Hamfests

Ohio ARRL hamfest and conventions

[Ohio Great Lakes Division ARRL Sanctioned Hamfests]

Or

https://arrl-ohio.org/hamfests/

Miscellaneous Rambling

Terry, KI8N

November brought several changes to our home. We had the siding, gutters, shutters, and soffit replaced. Went from a grey colored house with black trim to royal blue with white trim. Quite a differrence in appearance. However, with the outside work we also decided to clean up the exterior look and removed the TV tower which had been the location of the dual-band antenna. We didn't need the old TV antenna since it was no longer being used and couldn't come up with a good excuse to keep the tower bolted to the side of the house, so it had to go. Frank, KC8EVS gave me a couple of TV satellite dish mounts which I am imaging one of them will be the new mount for the dual-band antenna and attached to the eave of the house. But, for the time being, I am without a VHF/UHF radio in the shack.

I did one POTA event in November at Mount Gilead State Park (US-1977). I went to the park closest to home to try out my new FT-891. Thought it best to be close to home so if I had the radio set up wrong it wouldn't be far to go back. However, the radio and Hustler resonators worked great and I made 105 SSB contacts on 40M, 20M, 17M and 15M. I wanted to make sure the radio and resonators worked together without a tuner in the path. One item that concerned me was doing SSB without a headset as I do not have one for the 891. Instead I used the included microphone, radio internal speaker, and typed with one hand to enter contacts into the log and it worked just fine. Based on the results I may hold off getting a headset for this radio until Heil has their new single sided unit available next year (or so they are stating).

Setting up for a portable activation is fairly simple; mount the resonator on the truck bed stake mount, attach the coax to the mount and snake it into the truck through a window, set up the radio on the seat console attach the coax to the radio and then the USB cable from the radio to the computer for logging and operate from the passenger seat. Set up time is less than 15 minutes. Tear down is just as easy and can be done in about 10 minutes.

I have been working on getting the 64 Ford engine back together and would estimate it is 90% assembled. The remaining 10% will stay off until I get it back into the engine bay. While it is still on the stand next is filling the oil system and priming it throughout the engine to have a film of lubrication on all the parts

and to check for obvious leaks. Then attempting to set the initial timing so it is close when put back and shouldn't take a lot of effort to dial it in. Nothing like have something apart for almost 2 years and trying to remember where all the correct bolts and parts go back together. Always remember to take lots of photos during the disassembly phase.

This and last month's Final Takeaway columns have been interesting to me. I have had an RSPlay SDR receiver for several years and ocassionally use it to check for activities on the ham bands. With SDRUNO software it works good to display the entire spectrum for a selected band and be able to quickly check those frequencies. I liked reading the ARRL Handbook section on SDR Introduction even if my handbook is from 2019. Time flies as I did not know my handbook was that old, seems like it wasn't that long ago when I bought it.

Lastly, I attended the ARES Conference on November 22 in Newark. It was interesting and enjoyed the topics on NTS message handling, setting up ARES events, and updates to Volunteer Ham software for tracking ham/ARES radio related events. If you haven't read the Ohio Section Newsletter yet, Tom Sly, WB8LCD announced he is stepping down January 1st as the ARRL Ohio Section Manager. He is being replaced by Bret Stemen, KD8SCL who is the current Ohio Section Emergency Coordinator.

I am not going to be at the December dinner/election as we will be out of town. Wishing everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. See you next year. – "Be safe and Ham it UP"!

My Adventures in Ham Radio

Don, W8PEN

Assisted by Win11 Copilot

Chapter 1: The Spark

It was early summer of 1963. I was fourteen years old and finishing eighth grade. I ambled down the familiar streets of Mt. Vernon, Ohio, heading toward my favorite downtown shop—a cozy little magazine store known for its weekly supply of comic books. That mile-long walk gave me plenty of time to think.

"Man, I'm getting tired of comic books," I muttered. "Wish there was something new to read."

My usual reading diet consisted of Hardy Boys mysteries, science fiction, and the latest superhero adventures. But that day, I felt restless—ready for something different.

When I stepped into the store, the shopkeeper greeted me with a knowing smile. I was a regular, often spending an hour browsing before buying two or three comics. I smiled back and headed straight to the rack.

The comics were displayed on the lower shelves for kids, while the upper tiers held magazines for adults—crime stories, movie reviews, car culture, and more. My eyes drifted upward. One cover caught my attention: *Popular Electronics*.

"Hmm… this looks interesting," I thought, picking it up.

Flipping through the pages, I skimmed past articles on record players, televisions, and electronic toys—none of which sparked my interest. But then something unusual caught my eye.

"Wait—what's this?" I whispered.

A column on Amateur Radio. Diagrams filled the page—strange symbols representing circuits and components. The article described how to build a simple shortwave receiver using just one or two transistors. I had an AM transistor radio at home, so I had a vague idea of what it meant. But building one? That was something new.

Toward the end of the column, reader reports jumped out at me:

"I've had my license for six months and I've talked to 15 countries and 25 states."

"My gear is all homebrew. My antenna is a dipole up 20 feet. I've worked all 50 states!"

I was stunned. These weren't just adults, many of the operators were kids my age, smiling proudly beside their radios.

"This is amazing," I thought. "I've got to show Chuck."

The magazine cost as much as three comic books—every cent I had. But I didn't hesitate. I was hooked.

Chapter 2: Building the Dream

Chuck, my older brother, didn't need much convincing. He was a natural experimenter, fascinated by electronics and the idea of talking to people around the world through homemade circuits.

But Chuck was also a high school senior, with college looming and a busy social life. Between girls and graduation, ham radio didn't fit into his schedule. I'd have to pursue it alone.

Still, that brief encounter with ham radio planted a seed. When Chuck enrolled at the University of Dayton, he chose Electrical Engineering as his major, thanks in part to that magazine I'd brought home.

Meanwhile, I was determined to build one of the transistor shortwave receivers featured in *Popular Electronics*. But where could I find the parts in a small town like Mt. Vernon?

Mom had the answer. She remembered an electronics store in town and offered to take me there. With her help—both as chauffeur and financier—I gathered the components I needed. The store owner, Tom (K8LFA (SK)), turned out to be a licensed ham himself. He became my first ham radio mentor.

Back home, I claimed a small room off the back porch as my "Radio Shack." Lacking a soldering iron, I improvised: a wooden board with nails driven in to serve as connection points. I wrapped wires around the nails to link the components—a crude but flexible setup that allowed me to experiment freely.

And it worked.

My first creation—a two-transistor shortwave radio—picked up the Voice of America loud and clear. It was the only station I could hear, but it was a thrilling start.

From that moment on, I was unstoppable. Each month, I raced back to the magazine store to grab the latest issue of *Popular Electronics*, eager to try new circuits and dive deeper into the world of ham radio.

Chapter 3: The Spark That Caught Fire

The rest of 1963 was awesome for Chuck and me. I didn't have a ham license yet—or even a shortwave receiver—so I made do with DXing on the Broadcast and FM bands. It wasn't quite the promised land of ham radio, but it kept the spark alive.

That Christmas, everything changed. Mom and Dad gave Chuck a Knight Kit Span Master shortwave receiver. He built it himself, carefully soldering each connection with a hobby-store iron. When he powered it up, we were both hooked. With Chuck's blessing, I got to use the receiver often—especially after he left for college in 1964. That radio became my window to the world.

Then one evening in the Fall of 1964, Mom said something that lit me up:

> "There's a ham radio class starting next week. Would you be interested?"

Interested? I was over the moon.

The first night of class was unforgettable. I met real hams, got my study books, and had my first taste of Morse Code. To earn my Novice license, I'd need to copy code at five words per minute. It sounded daunting—but thrilling.

After a few weeks of practice, I decided to test myself. I tuned in Chuck's receiver and listened for live Morse. And there it was—real hams, sending real messages. I copied call signs, names, signal reports. It was like discovering a secret language. I couldn't stay away.

Test day finally came. I was nervous. The code? No problem. But the theory, especially the math and antenna stuff, made me worried. Had I learned enough?

I passed. That's all they told us—no scores, just a smile and a "Congratulations." It didn't matter. I was a ham. I floated home that night, grinning ear to ear.

Spotlight: The Knight Kit Span Master Receiver

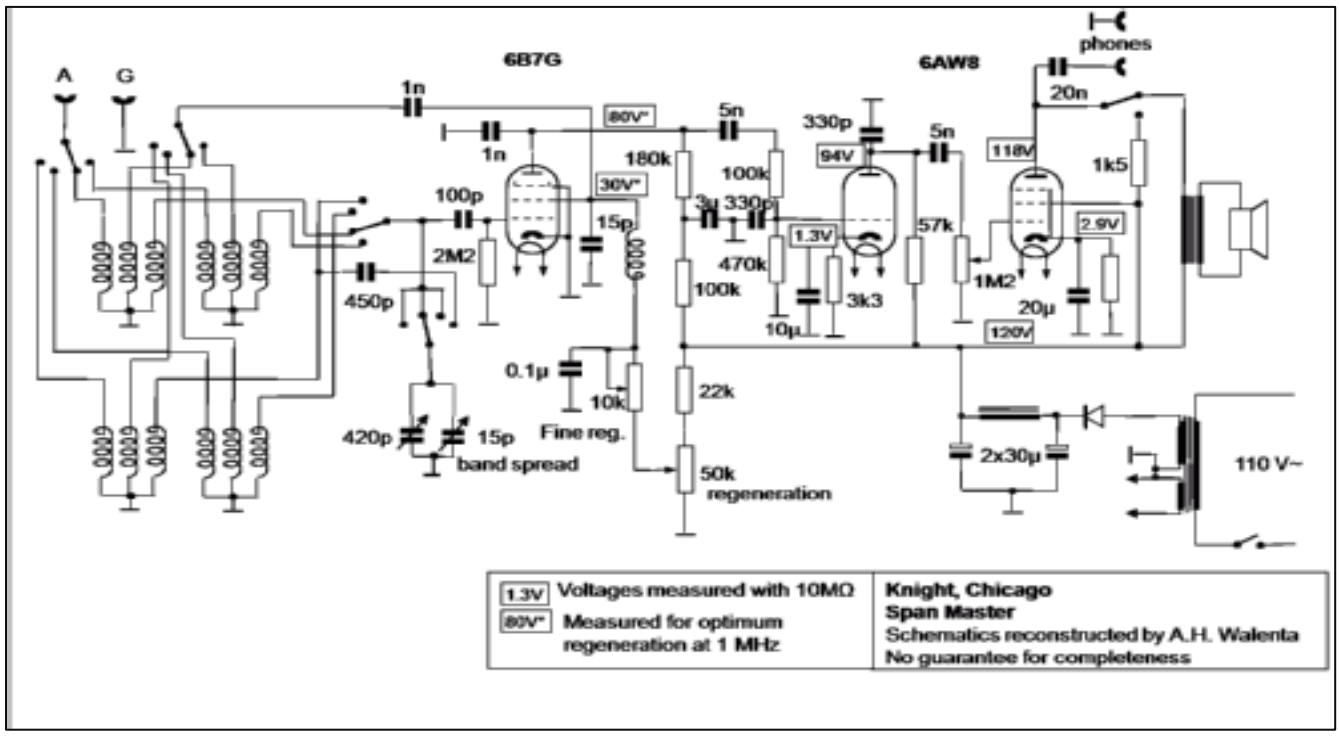
A Gateway to the Airwaves for Generations

Introduced in the early 1960s, the Knight Kit Span Master was more than just a shortwave receiver—it was a rite of passage for countless budding hams and electronics enthusiasts. Sold as a build-it-yourself kit by Allied Radio.

The Span Master offered:

- Coverage: 550 kHz to 30 MHz across four bands
- Design: Compact metal cabinet with a classic slide-rule dial
- Experience: A hands-on introduction to radio fundamentals, from soldering to signal chasing

Whether you built one as a teenager or inherited it from a mentor, the Span Master evokes the thrill of tuning into distant voices and mysterious signals. Its regenerative circuit design made it sensitive and affordable—perfect for newcomers eager to explore the world beyond AM broadcast.



To be continued!

Final Takeaway

Continuing from last month's description of SDR radio. After discussing what SDR is and how it is used it is time to get to the interesting part of how Software Defined Radios process signals. From the antenna input to the demodulated output.

First, in a traditional analog radio the signal is input through the following circuits.

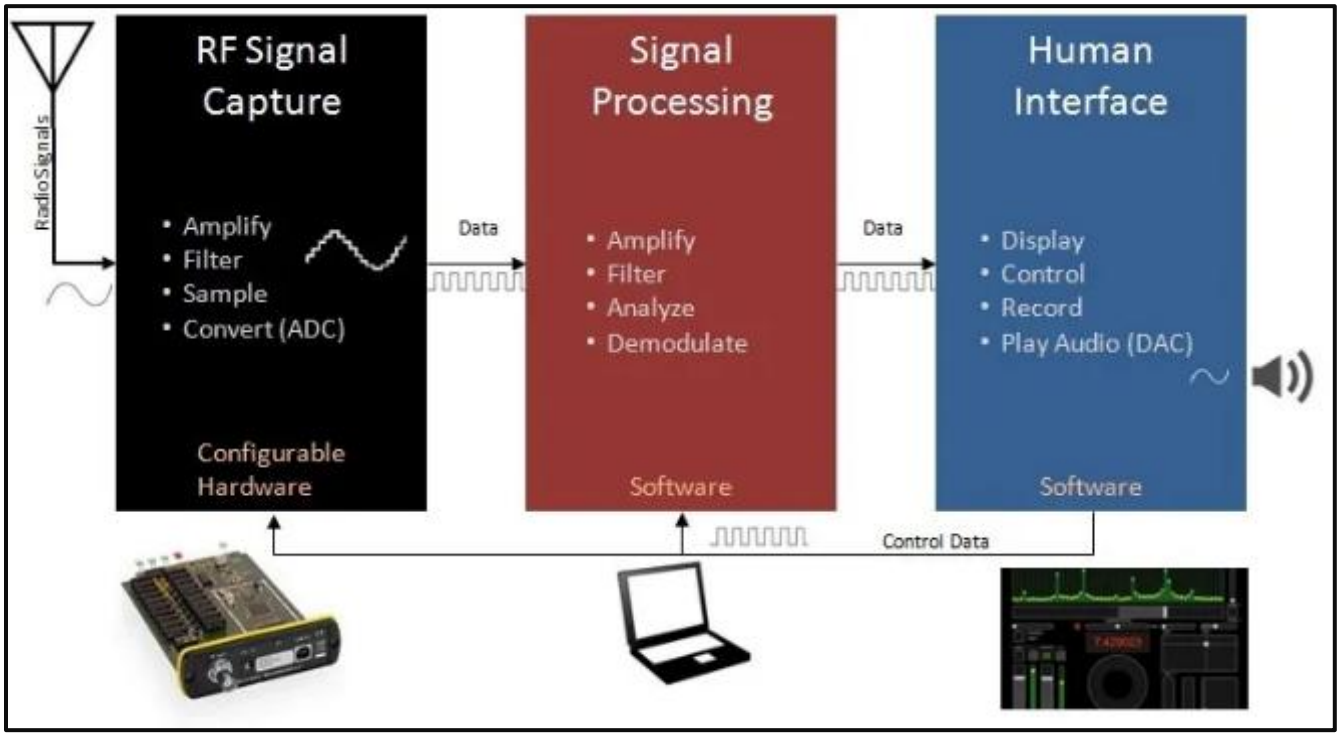
- Filters, mixers, and oscillators which are physical component circuits.
- The radio is tuned to a single frequency at a time.
- Changing modes (AM, FM, SSB or Digital) requires different circuitry.

"How did it get so late so soon? Its night before its afternoon. December is here before its June. My goodness how the time has flewn. How did it get so late so soon?" Dr. Suess

In an SDR, those steps are replaced by mathematical operations performed in software. The SDR hardware only does minimum operations such as capturing the raw radio signal and digitizing it for a computer to process. Therefore, an SDR radio can be small enough to plug into a USB port on a computer or larger.

RF Signal Capture - RF Front End

The SDR input receives an analog RF signal, say 14.200 MHz and the front-end receiver hardware will filter the desired frequency range via a band pass filter and then amplify the signal via a Low Noise Amplifier (LNA). Then the signal is sampled and goes to an Analog-to-Digital converter (ADC). The ADC samples the analog voltage at a high rate (10 million times per second) and produces digital numbers representing the signal strength at each instant. So, the input to an SDR is an RF signal and the output is a digital waveform.



Sampling and IQ Data

This section of an SDR is the heart of the unit. Here the data stream is broken into two components, **I** which is the in-phase signal and **Q** or Quadrature which is the 90° signal. These signals are 90° out of phase and together they represent the amplitude and phase of the signal.

Why is this done? Because RF signals carry information not just in amplitude (like AM) but also in phase and frequency like FM, PSK and other digital signals. The I/Q representation allows software to do any kind of demodulation mathematically.

Signal Processing - Filter and Analyze

The signal from the ADC might be a sample of a large range, such as 10 MHz but your desired signal may only be a few kHz wide, so the SDR software performs a digital downconversion (DDC) using the following process.

- Multiply the signal by a digital local oscillator to shift your target frequency to baseband (0 Hz)
- Apply a low pass filter to isolate the signal.
- Decimate (reduce sample rate) to focus only on that narrowband signal.

After this process there is a small but manageable stream of complex I/Q baseband data centered on your signal of interest.

Demodulation

This part of the process is done via SDR application software which can extract any part of the complex stream.

Mode	Digital Processing
AM	Take the magnitude: sqrt($I^2 + Q^2$)
SSB (USB / LSB)	Mix, filter, and extract one sideband
FM	Track phase changes over time
CW	Filter and detect tone bursts
Digital Modes	Decode symbols form phase/amplitude patterns

Each of these modes requires a unique digital signal processing (DSP) application.

Output - Data Decoding

After the signal is demodulated, the signal is output to a human interface such as a waterfall display, audio, or can be passed to digital decoder software such as WSJT-X, FLDIGI, DM780 and others. These outputs can be sound waves, text on a computer screen or displayed images (SSTV, weather images).

If you wish to learn more about and how SDR works the ARRL Handbook has an excellent introduction to SDR describing the differences between analog radio, sampling methods and DSP.

2026 Upcoming MVARC Events

Winter Field Day	January 24-25
NVIS Day	April 25
ARRL Field Day	June 26-28
Boy Scouts	TBD
Mount Vernon First Friday	August 7
OSPOTA	September 12
Centerburg Old Time Farm Festival	September 26-27
Club POTA	TBD

MVARC 2025 Club Officers

President
Frank, KC8EVS

Vice President
Emery, W8TW

Secretary / Treasurer
Terry, KI8N

PIO
Evan, KF8APC

No Photo Available

Director
Michael, KE8HGE

Director
Scott, N8SY

Director
Tyler, KF8AVA

No Photo Available

Director
Evan, KF8APC

No Photo Available

The MVARC Newsletter is delivered to club members via email containing a link to the MVARC webpage, 2025 Newsletters button.

** MVARC CQ is the official newsletter of the Mount Vernon Amateur Radio Club. **

Contact Us

Mailing Address
812 Coshocton Ave.
PMB #145
Mount Vernon, OH 43050

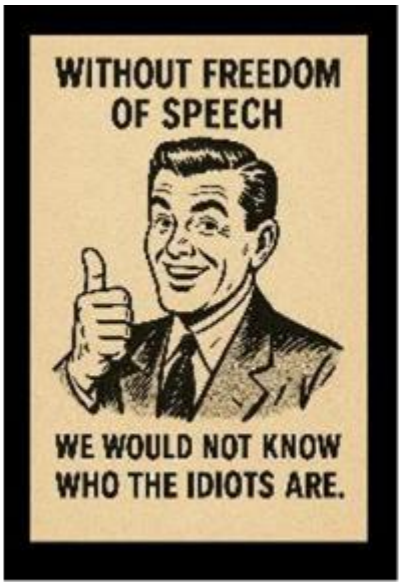
Web Page
mvarc.net

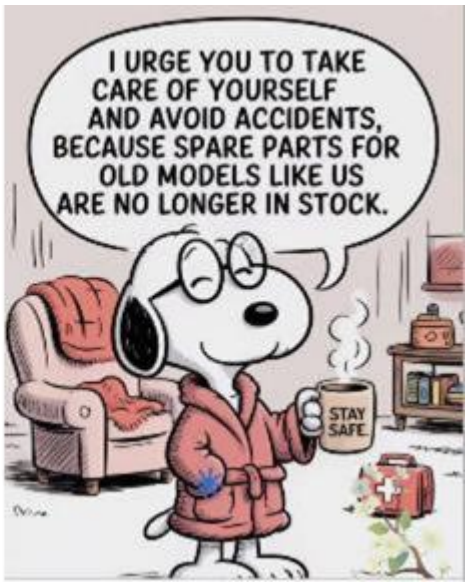
Facebook Page
https://www.facebook.com/mvarc

MVARC Email
admin@mvarc.net

November Northern Lights

As seen in Knox County.





Hams do it with more frequency!