

# OVARC NEWSLETTER

The Monthly Publication of the Okaw Valley Amateur Radio Club

Volume 8 Issue 1  
January 2016

## Club Meetings

First Thursday of each month  
at 7:00 PM  
KC Greenville Learning Center  
(Kaskaskia College)  
209 N. Third St.  
Greenville, IL 62246

## Next Meeting

February 4th 2016

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## Club Net

Each Sunday at 9:00 PM on  
147.165 PL 103.5  
Also on Linked Repeater  
System

## Club Repeaters

AD9OV/R  
147.165+ (PL 103.5)  
224.440- (PL 103.5)  
442.925+ (PL 103.5)



## A Late Start To The New Year

Did you think you missed the last issue of the newsletter? Well you didn't, I missed the deadline to get that issue out in time. Let me explain why. Normally this section is reserved for discussing whats coming up in our next meeting. This month is going to be a little different. As you may have noticed this newsletter is a little different looking than past newsletters. The old file that John (W9KXQ) handed down was just a little too buggy for me and I was spending more time fixing things that were supposed to update automatically than I was actually putting it together. John had the same issues but he's an old retired guy so he had time to mess with it. (insert laughter here) I've been wanting to do something different for several months and just couldn't find the time to start from scratch. So here it is, it's not final yet but you can get an idea on where I'm going with it. There will be some normal sections left out this month but I'll get them back in as time goes on and you will soon find some new content as well. The very "unfinished" pages will be obvious so thanks for your patience while I finish things up. I hope you enjoy the new format. If there is something new you would like to see let me know and we will try to add it in. (Tim - KT9TR)

# Learning Morse Code

Presented by OVARC President Ken - KK9N

## International Morse Code

1. The length of a dot is one unit.
2. A dash is three units.
3. The space between parts of the same letter is one unit.
4. The space between letters is three units.
5. The space between words is seven units.



For the February meeting we will be discussing the history of Morse Code, the different methods of learning it, the various hardware used, the software aids that are available, and the best practices of Morse Code. Ken would like all members that have paddles and keys to bring them to the meeting so we can show the different



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MEETING MINUTES  
December 10, 2015

President Ken Norris KK9N called the meeting to order at 6:20 PM on Thursday, December 10, 2015 at the Greenville Country Club immediately before our annual Christmas party. Those in attendance signed the sign-in sheet. There were 35 people present. A quorum was found to be present. The meeting began with a welcome and introduction of the members & guests present.

Secretary's Report

Kris WB9SLM moved to accept the minutes as published in the November newsletter. Seconded. Motion passed.

Treasurer's Report

Kris WB9SLM moved to dispense with the treasurer's report. Seconded. Motion carried.

Repeater Report

Ken KK9N reported that our new Yaesu Fusion repeater is ordered after OVARC's application was accepted. Our new repeater will be shipped out to us within the next two months.

Volunteer Examiner (VE) Report

Dennis W9DAW reported that since last month's meeting Josh James passed his Technician exam. Josh's call is KD9EZH. The next VE testing will be before our January meeting.

Elections

John W9KXQ reported that each of the following members has agreed to continue as our Board of Directors: Ken Norris KK9N, Tim Rapp KT9TR, Howard Wise N9GEQ, Cary Holman W4GRN, and John King W9KXQ. Dennis W9DAW moved to elect that slate as our Board of Directors for 2016. Seconded. Motion passed.

John W9KXQ reported that the following members have agreed to serve as officers for 2016: Ken Norris KK9N, President; Tim Rapp KT9TR, Vice-president; Howard Wise N9GEQ, Treasurer; Cary Holman W4GRN, Secretary. Lance K2SGS moved to close nominations and cast a unanimous ballot for those candidates. Seconded. Motion passed.

Announcements

Ken KK9N announced that the program at our January meeting will be about the K1N DXpedition to Navassa Island.

Members agreed that we should rent two tables at Winterfest in Collinsville in January.

Ken KK9N asked who has the OH9SCL call sign. The answer is Santa Claus. He will be operating throughout the holidays using the call signs OF9X and OH9AB.

Trivia Corner

Ken Norris KK9N asked the trivia corner question: What does WARC stand for? Mark WD9HBF knew that answer, the World Administrative Radio Conference which created these bands in 1979. The follow-up question was What amateur radio operation is prohibited on the WARC bands? The answer is that there is no contesting on the WARC bands.

Field Day Competition Award

Ron KO0Z and Mark WD9HBF were present representing the Macoupin County Amateur Radio Club. They presented members of OVARC with the award for winning the competition between the two clubs for earning the most points in Field Day 2015. The Macoupin County ARC earned 2,898 points while OVARC earned 4,390 points.

John W9KXQ moved to adjourn the meeting at 6:33 pm. Seconded. Motion passed.

Cary Holman W4GRN  
Secretary

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MEETING MINUTES  
January 7, 2016

President Ken Norris KK9N called the meeting to order at 7:30 PM on Thursday, January 7, 2016 in Room 107 of the Kaskaskia College Education Center on Third Street in Greenville. Those in attendance signed the sign-in sheet. There were 11 people present. A quorum was found to be present. The meeting began with a welcome and introduction of the members & guests present.

Secretary's Report

Cary Holman W4GRN read the minutes of the December 10, 2015 meeting. Dan Frey K9DNO moved to accept the minutes. Seconded. Motion passed.

Treasurer's Report

No treasurer's report was available.

Repeater Report

Ken reported on our new digital repeater. They lost the \$500 check we sent them. Ken put the charge on his credit card, so our repeater is on its way. Lance K2SGS reported that our remote receive site for the 2 meter repeater in Highland lost its antenna. It will be warm weather before it is replaced.

Volunteer Examiner (VE) Report

No one came to be tested before tonight's meeting. Cary W4GRN reported that our VEC, Dennis W9DAW, would like to begin offering testing on an appointment only basis. Dennis would provide W5YI with his email address and cell phone number. When someone would contact him, Dennis would call area VEs to pull together a testing team. That plan seemed reasonable to the members present.

Ken KK9N announced that all the tables were sold out at Winterfest before we spoke for the two tables we usually have. We are on the waiting list for tables for the January 23 event in Collinsville.

Ken KK9N announced that this year the club will have two new committees each composed of three members: 1) a program committee, and 2) a special events committee (e.g., fox hunt, Bicentennial). We need volunteers for both committees or we will draw names. Dan K9DNO and Cary W4GRN volunteered for the program committee. No one at this meeting volunteered for the special events committee, but Ken thought that John W9KXQ was interested in serving on that committee.

Ken KK9N has been asked to set up his satellite tracking gear to communicate with the International Space Station from the Indiana Children's Museum in Indianapolis. The date is to be determined. He plans to stop by on the way to Dayton to scope out the location.

Trivia Corner

No newsletter was published this month with a trivia corner question.

Lance K2SGS moved to close the business meeting at 7:22 pm. Seconded. Passed.

Program:

Ken KK9N showed a video about the K1N Navassa Island DXpedition. Navassa Island is between Jamaica and Haiti, south of Cuba. There have been DXpeditions there in the past, but the last one was in the 1990s. The shore of the island is forty-foot rock cliffs, so getting onto the island was a challenge. A ladder that had been used in past DXpeditions had been removed by the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, so access for this DXpedition was by helicopter flown from Jamaica. A typical flight took about an hour and a half each way, plus the time to unload. It took several trips to get all the gear and hams to the island. A decommissioned lighthouse is the focal point of the island. The team was able to hang some of their antennas from the lighthouse. They made 140,000 contacts.

The meeting adjourned at 8:08.

Cary Holman W4GRN  
Secretary

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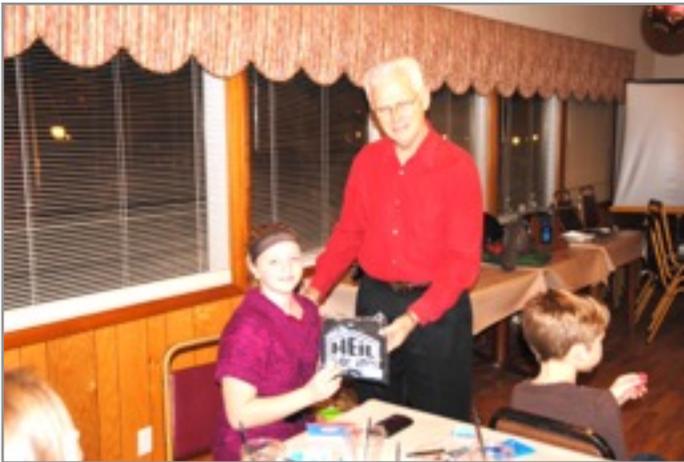
# 2015 OVARC Annual Meeting & Christmas Dinner



We had a great showing for the annual Christmas Dinner / Annual Meeting



Cary W4GRN with Josh KD9EZH



John W9KXQ with Kourtney KC9WZM



Ken KK9N with ( L - R ) Emily KC9UBI, Kortney KC9WZM, Josh KD9EZH, Clayton KC9WZL, Ty KD9CLQ



2016 OVARC Board of Directors - Cary W4GRN, Ken KK9N, Tim KT9TR, John W9KXQ & Howard N9GEQ (not pictured)



2016 OVARC Officers - Cary W4GRN, Ken KK9N, Tim KT9TR & Howard N9GEQ (Not Pictured)



Mark WD9HBF taking in the defeat as Ken KK9N reads off the final stats from 2105 ARRL Field Day



Mark WD9HBF pinning the 2015 ARRL Field Day trophy on the K9MCE/AD9OV Filed Day trophy



The Annual ARRL Field Day Trophy  
AD9OV - 2 vs. K9MCE - 0



Winners ate cake and losers ate crow (we share our cake with Ron KO0Z and Mark WD9HBF)



Tim KT9TR and Mark WD9HBF



Ron KO0Z and Mark WD9HBF getting ready to eat Crow ( this was the closest we could find)

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# Letter Regarding Accuracy of the ARRL Repeater Directory

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Illinois Repeater Association  
Aaron A. Collins N9OZB, Frequency Coordinator  
1338 S. Arlington Hts. Rd., Arlington Heights, IL 60005

December 2, 2015

A Letter from the Frequency Coordinator:

Greetings!

I have two very important subjects that I need to discuss with you. The first is of a financial nature, The Illinois Repeater Association is having some financial concerns currently. The numbers of memberships we have been receiving have fallen to the point where we can no longer afford to continue doing things as we have in the past. We do not feel it is appropriate to charge more than the \$20.00 membership fee we currently have, but we have hopes we can increase the number of memberships to the point where we will be OK.

In the annual updates we send out at the end of each year, we have a paragraph about joining IRA, and what it says is true. We rely on your memberships to pay for the costs of our operations, which mostly consist of mailings and the annual meeting we have each year. Due to the falling membership numbers, we have had to abandon the comfortable conference/meeting room arrangements we have had in the past, and are now having to try to locate facilities that will host our meetings at a significantly lower, or no cost.

Please consider becoming an IRA member and supporter, if you are not already. If you are, thank you very much! Your support is very much appreciated and is essential if the IRA is to continue as an organization. Without the IRA, frequency coordination would be completely in a free-for-all state, and that would be a very undesirable situation for all concerned.

The second issue is also important, but for a different reason.

I am writing this with much regret, but the Illinois Repeater Association can no longer recommend the ARRL Repeater Directory as a valid and up-to-date source of repeater information. The information they have for the upcoming 2015-2016 issue of their Repeater Directory will have severely out of date (2 or more years old) information for the State of Illinois and quite a few others. None of the changes made in the last calendar year of 2014 through the end of 2015 for Illinois (and many other states) will be included in this year's upcoming issue, same as last year. They will keep re-printing the last bulk data submission they would accept from us at the end of 2013, no matter how out of date and useless the information has become. From this point on, the only official source of current and valid repeater directory information will be directly from the IRA website at [www.ilra.net](http://www.ilra.net). This gets updated directly from our database several times throughout the year, usually every 2-3 months or so, and should be considered the only known accurate and up-to-date source of repeater information for the state of Illinois.

This repudiation is strictly aimed at the Repeater Directory group within the ARRL, an otherwise fine and useful organization that has many other facets which are unaffected by and unrelated to this issue. The Illinois Repeater Association has had a long history and successful relationship with the ARRL in the past. However, due to an internal decision at the Repeater Directory division of the ARRL, they have decided to make some very serious and detrimental changes to the way their directory information is collected and maintained. Since they have made these changes, we can no longer submit our information in the simple batch form as we have for the past 15 or more years.

The changes in the ARRL submission procedure started at the beginning of 2014, when the decision was made to require the various states' Frequency Coordinators to manually log in to an ARRL web site, and edit the repeater directory listings all by hand, on-line. This ridiculous solution no longer allowed any batch submissions of the state's data at all from anyone anymore.

This was completely absurd. We maintain over 500 listings in our state alone. We refused to do their work for them, for free. We refused to maintain two separate, redundant databases; our own state data, and theirs. We had no resources to allocate for this needless extra maintenance work. If we agreed to comply with their proposed changes, it would mean what was once a simple 10-minute email submission by the Frequency Coordinator to the ARRL once a year would turn into a full-time 8 hour a day job for 1 person for over an entire week. Our organization consists entirely of volunteers doing this work without compensation or salary and placing extra, needless time demands on them like this for absolutely no good reason was clearly unacceptable. >>> continued on next page <<<

As a result, last year's 2014-2015 directory contained stale data over a year old for many states, including Illinois. Due to their adoption of this very questionable policy, they had managed to annoy and alienate many of the various states' coordinating bodies. One of our neighboring states has severed ties entirely with the ARRL. Several others were very unhappy with this turn of events, as were we, and were still considering their position on the matter. The future appeared very uncertain.

Now, fast-forward to earlier this year. A software consulting company was hired by the ARRL to resolve the situation, and they went off and re-wrote most of the software the ARRL uses to compile the repeater directory internally. In the process of doing this, working under the inscrutable direction of the ARRL repeater directory management, they designed an entirely new system that was completely incompatible with one or more of the existing coordination software programs that are widely in use by Coordinators, without any way to transfer the information in our databases to theirs. This solution was just as bad as the previous idea, and likewise had the same effect - leaving hand-editing the data as the only course of action.

I was very disappointed to hear this. Their refusal to adopt one of the current working neutral languages or support any of the older submission formats was a very arbitrary and unreasonable approach to the problem. Instead, they have decided to re-invent the wheel, and have come up with some new bizarre format that serves no one very well except themselves.

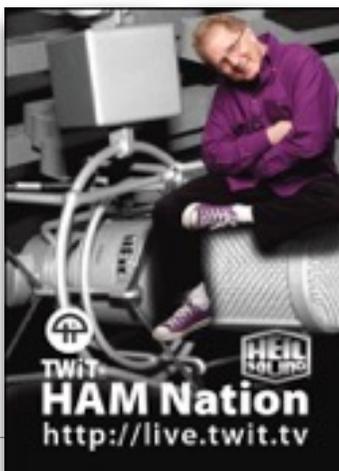
The time that was spent coming up with this new foreign format would have been much better spent making it compatible with the many tools that already exist, and that have already worked out most of the various issues that complicate such an undertaking.

While I understood the need for a new and better way of storing and exchanging data is needed with the new digital formats that have to be supported, abandoning all reason in the approach taken has caused the further alienation of large number of states' coordinating bodies. Arbitrarily requiring everyone to now accommodate a new and incompatible submission format regardless of the fact that it is completely unsupported by our current coordination software was an extremely unwise decision. Most of the state's Coordinators are just users of their particular coordination software. They are not expert programmers and do not have the skill or ability to write some kind of a conversion utility for themselves, nor do most states' volunteer coordinating bodies have the resources to hire a professional programmer or consultant to write a conversion utility or program. Requiring them to adopt their new format is beyond the ability for most of the various states' Coordinators to accommodate in any reasonable fashion.

I am sincerely dismayed by the outcome here, as I was assured by the various local and regional ARRL representatives that this would be all worked out in time for this year's annual submission. This represents a massive failure, and has resulted in a disastrous outcome in which everyone loses. The IRA loses. We don't get our current repeater data distributed. The ARRL loses. They are distributing a vastly inferior and out of date product. Last but not least, the amateur radio community loses. They don't get a useful, accurate portable reference directory they can rely on for valid and current repeater information.

We made the decision earlier this year to repudiate the ARRL Repeater Directory unless and until this situation was rectified. Unfortunately, since the situation still has not been resolved, we must continue to take this position. This decision has been made and this notice published with the consent and unanimous agreement of the Illinois Repeater Association Board of Directors.

Aaron A. Collins, N9OZB  
Illinois Repeater Association  
Frequency Coordinator



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## Ham Nation

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Wednesday Evenings

8:00 PM CDT

twit network <http://twit.tv>



## **OVARC Information**

*Repeaters*  
147.165, 224.440,  
442.925

### **2016 Officers**

President  
Ken Norris KK9N  
[KK9N@ovarc.net](mailto:KK9N@ovarc.net)

Vice-President  
Tim Rapp KT9TR  
[KT9TR@ovarc.net](mailto:KT9TR@ovarc.net)

Secretary  
Cary Holman W4GRN  
[W4GRN@ovarc.net](mailto:W4GRN@ovarc.net)

Treasurer  
Howard Wise N9GEQ  
[N9GEQ@ovarc.net](mailto:N9GEQ@ovarc.net)

Repeater Trustees  
Ken Norris KK9N  
John King W9KXQ  
Don Stover KB9EGI  
[KB9EGI@ovarc.net](mailto:KB9EGI@ovarc.net)

V.E. Team Coordinator  
Dennis W9DAW  
[VEteam@ovarc.net](mailto:VEteam@ovarc.net)

Net Manager  
Clareen Dunn KB9BEB  
[KB9BEB@ovarc.net](mailto:KB9BEB@ovarc.net)

Webmaster  
John King W9KXQ  
Website  
<http://www.ovarc.net>

## **Net Information**

### **Okaw Valley ARC Weekly Net**

The Okaw Valley ARC holds a weekly net on the Linked Repeater System at 9:00 PM on Sunday evenings. Net Control Stations serve on a rotating basis. They control our "informal Net and take announcements and check-in at appropriate times. All licensed Amateurs are invited to check-in. The net observes holidays throughout the year. [[See Net Schedule Here](#)]

### **Illinois ARES SSB HF Net Information**

Frequency - 3.905 MHz LSB

The net is called at 1630 local time on the first and third Sunday of every month. They are called by Sections and Bond and Clinton Counties are in Region 8. When Region 8 is called any station from Bond or Clinton County who is an ARES member, or ARES volunteer can check into the net. Every HF station is invited if they would like to come onboard. Multiple pathways into your county with information is the goal.

### **W9VEY Memorial Net**

The W9VEY Memorial Net meets on Mondays at 8:30 PM on the 146.82 MHz Repeater located in Gillespie, Illinois. Mike Funk WA9RUM Net Control Operator. This Net has been on the air since 1976.

## **General Contact Information**

### **General Mailing Address**

OVARC Inc.  
P.O. Box 3 Greenville, IL 62246

### **Newsletter Editor**

Tim Rapp KT9TR  
Editor Email: [KT9TR@arrl.net](mailto:KT9TR@arrl.net)  
Please send emails regarding articles, new items, corrections, etc

### **Okaw Valley ARC Website**

[www.ovarc.net](http://www.ovarc.net)

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## My View From Here

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Technology makes everything better they say. Maybe it does but theres a lot to say about the simplicity of the way things use to be. For most of January I've been trying to diagnose an issue with my late model GMC Yukon. The dashboard is lit up like a Christmas tree with numerous service indicator lights from a bunch of unrelated systems except that the computers for each of these systems tell each other to stop working properly if something doesn't look right to any one of them so the idiot behind the wheel will take it in for service. Well this idiot is too bull headed and too broke to let someone else work on his cars, (mostly too broke, young kids and recovering from Christmas) after all I grew up around drag cars, street racers and stock cars and was wrenching on them since I was in 6th grade helping my big brother rebuild the engines in his drag cars. Through high school I had my own cars to play with and continued on after high school cutting the roofs off perfectly good mini-trucks turning them into convertibles and spent a couple of years working on the real deal 3500 pound circle track cars. I wasn't about to let this thing get the best of me, after all I've always enjoyed working on cars and the bigger the challenge the bigger the reward when I fixed it. So in between all of the cussing and hair pulling I starting thinking what it must have been like to operate a radio years ago. I got into this hobby in the modern times with all the solid state devices, Software Defined Radios and automatic antenna tuners. Heck I barely touch my actual radio other than powering it on, I control it using the desktop PC and log everything right there using the same keyboard and most of that is even done for me with little input from me. I've never had the joy of actually operating an old radio and learn it's personality like I did all my cars. I guess there are a lot of similarities in old cars and old radios. I always hear the old guys (I've got a few more years I can say that) talk about having to "warm up" their radios before they can use them. I remember the days as most of us do when you had to warm up your cars before you could drive them and each one of them had their own personality. These days we just turn our radios on and start talking or jump in our cars when it's 10 degrees outside and drive away without having to play with a manual choke and get it up temperature or worse, hope the automatic choke actually worked. Sure, all the new technology we have access to does make things easier use or get better performance, but it provides very little intimacy in actually operating the thing. Then I start to think about the younger generations; it's sad to think my eleven year old son may never know the true joy in keeping something working and the satisfaction that comes from fixing something that can't be fixed by just reprogramming it. I think it's time to sell off some of the many projects I've started and have yet to finish to make space in the garage and look for an old 1960's car or truck to restore with him so he can feel the same joy I still carry with me.

Tim

KT9TR

Excuse My Mess - Still Working On Homes For This Information

**Testing Opportunities**

Dennis Warren W9DAW - OVARC VE Team Manager

Contact Dennis W9DAW (618)-292-9638 [VETeam@ovarc.net](mailto:VETeam@ovarc.net)

Kaskaskia College Greenville Education Center 209 N. Third St. Greenville, IL 62246

Courtesy call or e-mail appreciated. Two forms of ID required (one with photo). If upgrading, original, plus copy of both license and any Certificates of Successful Completion (CSCE's) are required.

**Reminder: Dues for 2016 due January 1, 2016**

Dues for 2016 are \$25.00 per member per year, second family member is \$10. Student dues \$5 per year

You can pay Howard N9GEQ at club meetings or send a check made payable to Okaw Valley Amateur Radio Club

**Net Schedule**

Jan 31 - KZ9EMT - Troy

Feb 7 - KT9TR - Tim

Feb 14 - W9KXQ - John

Feb 21 - KD8KLB - Román

Feb 28 - KB9BEB - Clareen

**Ken's Trivia Corner (KK9N)**

"What year was regular Morse Code communications established between the United States and Europe?"



603 E. Harris Ave. Greenville, IL 62246 618-664-3353 [will-o-th-wind.com](http://will-o-th-wind.com)

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# Friends of OVARC

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## Owl Creek Gazette

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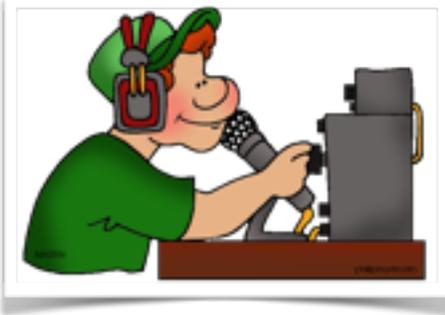
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## The Amateurs Code

- The Radio Amateur is -

**CONSIDERATE** - Never knowingly operating in such a way as to lessen the pleasure of others.

**LOYAL** - Offering loyalty, encouragement and support to other amateurs, local clubs and the American Radio Relay League, through which Amateur Radio in the United States is represented nationally and internationally.

**PROGRESSIVE** - With knowledge abreast of science, a well built and efficient station, and operation beyond reproach.

**FRIENDLY** - With slow and patient operation when requested, friendly advice and counsel to the beginner, kindly assistance, co-operation and consideration for the interests of others. These are the hallmarks of the amateur spirit.

**BALANCED** - Radio is an avocation, never interfering with duties owed to family, job, school or community.

**PATRIOTIC** - With station and skill always ready for service to country and community.



## Amateur Radio Is...

- Community Service
- Emergency Communications
- Learning New Technologies
- Worldwide Friendships
- A Hobby Without Borders!

Want to become a Ham Radio Operator

Contact us at [OVARC@ovarc.net](mailto:OVARC@ovarc.net)

P.O. Box 3 Greenville, IL 62246