



***It's FUN!!***

The Ohio Section, “A look at what happened in the Ohio Section for 2017”

Amazing!!... That really doesn't express it enough for what we've done this year! It has really been crazy – Attending hamfests – 22 of them, and attending meetings and functions from as many clubs as I could get to – more than 100 of them! Training, and ramping up of every program that we have in the Section was our goal for 2017. Most importantly however, was having FUN! As many of you have noticed, we have that emphasized greatly on our logo. Amateur Radio has a serious side, but that doesn't mean that you can't have fun too, and that's why it appears in big bold letters on our logo!

So, as Paul Harvey always would say... “Now... Here's the rest of the story.”

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## January

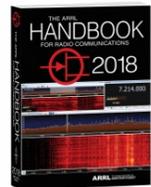
2017 started out with a huge yearlong push to get all of our 1,700 Ohio ARES members to have completed and registered in our statewide database those ever so important four ICS courses (IS 100, 200, 700 and 800).



Initiated an EC/DEC Report Card on the Ohio Section ARES website in order to help improve getting the EC/DEC monthly reports in, and on-time. This report card is a color-coded chart that shows if the reports have been received and whether they are late or on-time, or not received at all. It is open to the public for inspection, but does not contain any specific information other than if the report was received or not. Anyone viewing this report can see for themselves if their EC/DEC is doing his/her job in getting those important monthly reports in.

We had our 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Ohio ARES VHF Simplex Contest in January. It was a huge success once again this year. We had a lot of stations activated and on the air for this really FUN event. It was a blast, and demonstrated to all that we have the ability to communicate on VHF SIMPLEX!

The 26<sup>th</sup> Annual Newsletter Contest gets underway. We have over 40 newsletters in the Section that participate for this coveted award. This year the winner will go on and compete in the Great Lakes Division “Joe Phillips, K8QOE” Newsletter Contest.



Our Handbook Giveaway Contest is continuing forward with monthly drawings. The importance of this drawing is to get people interested in viewing the Ohio Section Website on a regular basis. It is doing just that. Our numbers for views on the website have doubled from this same period last year. We have over 2,000 entrants each month register for a chance to receive a Handbook, and on occasions, other really nice gifts as well.

WebEOC (Ohio's EMA statewide communications network program) was updated and training began for everyone, including Amateur Radio Operators on this new system.

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## **February**

February brought the annual "Freeze Your Acorns Off" HF contest, sponsored by the Portage County Amateur Radio Service (PCARS). It was a big hit and no one froze, too much!

The Dresden Elementary Amateur Radio Station (D.E.A.R.S.) was on the air with the School Club Round-up contest.

The Ohio Section Emergency Coordinator Stan, N8BHL does a presentation on Amateur Radio's role with the week in July, 2016 for the Michigan State Interoperability Conference. His review is about Ohio's ARES activities during the Republican National Convention / NAACP National Convention / Toledo National Air Show that occurred all within the same week in 2016. Amateur Radio not only was there, but we played a significant role in the communications for these 3 major events.

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## **March**

Amateur Radio Operators were called to staff several Emergency Operations Centers during a communications failure in northeastern Ohio when the 911 / MARCS system went down. Amateur Operators filled the gap with DMR and analog communications to the needed emergency centers.

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## **April**

Annual Ohio ARES Conference was held on April 1st. There were 120 in attendance from all over Ohio. To view the videos: <http://arrrl-ohio.org/SEC/sec-conf-2017.html>

Ohio's NVIS Day near the end of the month was a huge success. Everyone got to learn not only what a NVIS antenna is, but how to make and install and operate from it as well. The weather wasn't too bad, but the bands were lousy! I have to tell ya', it was a learning experience for everyone that participated, but most of all, it was FUN for everyone that participated!

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## May

The Ohio Section joins with Ohio Responds. This gives the Ohio Section ARES members limited liability protection during an emergency declared by the state or political subdivision or in disaster-related exercises, testing or other training activities. The prerequisite requirements are that they be valid licensed Amateur Radio Operators, and that they have completed at least the 4 basic NIMS courses (IS-100, 200, 700 & 800) and have documented proof (copies of their certificates or FEMA Transcript) of passing these courses entered into the Ohio Section Database, prior to being approved.



The Third Annual Section Managers Conference was held on the Thursday just before Hamvention and hosted by the Ohio Section. We had 25 Section Managers and League Officials from across the nation attending.

Hamvention weekend was a true experience. It was a new venue for everyone and it worked! The Ohio Section hosted a booth where folks could meet and greet ARRL Officials and get information on where things were located at the hamfest.

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## June

The Newton Falls Technology and Multimedia Club (K8TGR) hosted its first annual "Tigers on the Air" special event. The "on the air" event even included a balloon launching!

The Regional Operations Center (ROC) in Cincinnati was opened up and operational for 2 weeks with Amateur Radio Operators staffing the communications center. There was a fear of a major incident occurring during a very controversial court decision.

I traveled to and visited 15 Field Day sites during Field Day Weekend. What a great time I had being with all of you.

June saw the Ohio Section adding 3 new ARRL Affiliated Clubs in this first 6 months of 2017, and added two new clubs to the ever-growing Special Services Clubs group, as well as having many more renew their SSC as well.

Our ARES members are really ramping up on their training. We now have over 560 of our ARES members with all 4 NIMS courses (IS-100, 200, 700 & 800) in and their certificates on file in the Ohio Section Database. We can proudly say that we have over 5,000 courses completed and growing every day!

State of Ohio Emergency Operations Center Amateur Radio Room move that was implemented last year at this time, is now completed. The Amateur Radio Operations Room was moved to a location just off of the actual E.O.C. itself. We are now located so that communications can be quickly and easily be disseminated and distributed to those served agencies.

All new antennas, feedlines and radios were purchased and have now been installed and tested. We are fully operational once again in the Ohio Emergency Operations Center (W8SGT aka “Sarge”).

A statewide network has been developed utilizing DMR/D-Star/Fusion for any regional incidents that could occur within the Ohio area. This net is tested each week on Wednesday nights with check-ins not only from Ohio, but most of our adjacent states as well. We also have check-ins from California, Georgia, Texas, New York too. This NET was designed to “test” the system on a regular basis and find any problems that could impede communications when really needed. This network was utilized heavily during the Republic National Convention and supplied a solid communications link between all of our major cities (Cleveland, Toledo, Columbus, Marietta, and Cincinnati) in Ohio during that week of events.

Our website thus far this year has taken 3,574,683 hits and used 23.63 GB of bandwidth. Our program of getting people to view the website is working!

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## July

Started the month off by introducing the Ohio Section to PostScript. This is our new weekly news update that comes out every Monday Morning. PostScript is a supplement to the monthly Ohio Section Journal.



Since there is so much news and important information to be distributed to our Ohio Section, it was decided to increase the amount of times per month that we communicate with everyone, and now we are also including folks from around the country too. Having freshly built a new emailing system to go along with the additional newsletters, we are now utilizing it for emailing out our newsletters to over 2,000 individuals that wouldn't normally receive our newsletter with just the ARRL emailing system alone. We are getting out message out to more than 6,500 interested folks from all over Ohio and the country every week! And, this list is growing.

We also changed the format of the Ohio Section Journal to a more enriched and easier to read version. We eliminated the “text only” format so that we could give our readers a more interesting and complete news update. We now can include pictures, graphs and just about anything that can be printed into the articles to make them much more interesting. We no longer need to keep the articles just “Plain Jane.” It's been an exciting move, and one that has had a great effect on how we get the news to our readers for sure.

Now July was also when I had to slow it down some for me personally. I was involved in a motorcycle accident and I was forced to curtail things for a bit while I recovered. But, the good news is that we survived and I'm getting stronger every day!

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## **August**

Our annual Columbus Hamfest / Ohio Section Conference was held with great success. We named The Radiogram from the Portage Amateur Radio Service as our winner of the 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Ohio Section Newsletter winner. Also announce at the Conference Jim Yoder, W8ERW as this year's recipient of the Allan Severson Memorial Award (Ohio's Ham of the Year).

We did have an outbreak of bad weather on August 17th spurring a tornado in Trumbull County. We also had flooding in the Findlay area that resulted in a lot of property damage to homes and businesses. Our ARES EC/DEC email distribution was working overtime that day for sure. It was later determined that the tornado was an EF-1 and caused considerable damage to some houses and out buildings.

Hurricane Harvey hit Texas and a few of Ohio's ARES folks were tapped to go down to help out with the relief efforts there.

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## **September**

This was a very active month for hurricane Irma as she found another group of our Ohio ARES folks assisting with relieve efforts in Florida and Hurricane Maria followed up devastating Puerto Rico. Ohio ARES was once again tapped to send some volunteers to both areas as well.

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## **October**

S.E.T. in the Ohio Section was "Black Swan." This exercise involved a number of state and local governments around the country, military and served agencies utilizing many different modes of operation and frequencies. It was a very big success for everyone that was involved.

The Great Lakes Division Convention was held that same weekend, and The Radiogram from the Ohio Club PCARS was announced as the winner of the Joseph J. Phillips, K8QOE - Great Lakes Division Newsletter Contest, beating out the top newsletter picks from Kentucky and Michigan. Jim Weaver, K8JE, former Great Lakes Director and Ohio resident was announced as the recipient of the George S. Willison III, Lifetime Achievement Award. Stan Broadway, N8BHL the Ohio Section Emergency Coordinator was named as the Great Lakes Division Amateur of the Year. Bob Dixon, W8ERD an Ohio resident was named as the recipient of the Great Lakes Division Technical Achievement Award and Chris Brault, KD8YVJ also an Ohio resident, was named as the Great Lakes Division Young Radio Amateur of the Year Award recipient.

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## November

November 5th was a real test of our ARES system in Ohio. We had an outbreak of 17 tornadoes that day with 12 of our counties being affected by those tornadoes. They ranged from EF-0 to EF-2 in sized and had a devastating effect on those who got hit for sure. Houses, barns and many outbuildings were leveled or partially destroyed. Most of these buildings were insured so there will be no declarations signed for damage, but it will run in the millions of dollars just the same.



I did get to present the 111<sup>th</sup> ARRL Affiliated Club certificate at the Southern Ohio Amateur Radio Association Christmas Party. Now that was a blast. I also presented them with a Proclamation from the Ohio Section Manager for becoming the 111<sup>th</sup> Affiliated Club as well.

On November 18th we had a very serious flash flood in the town of Greenville in Darke County. What made this incident so serious was the fact that the flooding effected the water supply in the city of Greenville which as a population of 15,000 residences. Our ARES groups were on standby in case we would be needed for communications. Luckily, everything worked out and we didn't have to activate.

I attended the Ohio Public Private Partnership (OP3) Fall Conference. It was really great hearing from all the guest speakers. We now have over 560 partners in OP3 and the ARRL Ohio Section is one of them. We had a great discussion on the Ohio Credentialing System too. There's been some updates to the system and it's now even better and being recognized by every law enforcement agency in the state.



November also was a milestone for our ARES NIMS program. We reached the goal of 600 persons registered in our statewide database with all four of their NIMS courses (IS 100, 200, 700 & 800) completed. To celebrate this auspicious occasion, we sent Troy Blair, KE8DRR an official ARRL ARES Vest. We then set the goal up to 625 members for another vest to be given out, as an incentive!

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## December

December kicked off our new Tiered ARES membership system. We designed this to be just like the FCC Licensing, you earn the privilege to do more things when you obtain the training required to do them. Those entering ARES without their 4 required NIMS courses will be a “General Member” and a Tier II person.

Tier II operators will be encouraged to participate in public service events, work projects with equipment and stations, and do the type of work ARES members have done for years. Tier II members will NOT be activated for service during emergencies that involves operation in EOC’s, or for partner agencies who require the FEMA certification.

In the event that additional manpower may be needed (The Big One) they, like spontaneous volunteer amateur operators outside Ohio’s ARES program, may be assigned to secondary tasks. While ALL time invested by our volunteers is valuable and important, Tier II operators will be at the “Entry Level” of ARES in Ohio.

Whereas our Tier I operators in ARES will be those who have completed the four FEMA courses, having certificates on file with both their county EC and the Ohio ARES Training Database.

The Tier I members are the prime operators who will be activated when requested by our partner emergency agencies such as the EMA. As a Tier I member you are able to be credentialed through our Statewide Credentialing system – EPCS. This credential is recognized throughout Ohio and comes from the Ohio Department of Homeland Security. They are also eligible to register with “Ohio Responds” for liability protection, again under the State of Ohio. The 4 FEMA courses are requirements for both, as they are run by the State of Ohio. We even offer the Tier I member a very low cost (\$9) national background check if they wish to do it.

I attended the Winter Conference of the Emergency Management Association of Ohio (EMAO) where I am a member of the Education Committee. This 2-day Conference is attended by all of the EMA Directors throughout the state of Ohio. It is a great way for the Ohio Section to get to know them and them to know us and our abilities and willingness to help out whenever possible.

On December 12th, our Southwestern Ohio ARES group in Cincinnati was called upon to help with communications during a million-dollar update to the City of Cincinnati’s 911 system. Our ARES teams were ready and on station when the cutover to the new system came on board. It was a smooth transition, and luckily everything went as planned with no hiccups.

Our website is very popular now days. Here’s the stats for 2017. I think you’ll find this very impressive for sure.

Year 2017	Unique visitors	Number of visits	Pages	Hits	Bandwidth
	67,829	110,809	1,040,108	6,292,201	59.99 GB

This is double the amount from 2016, and quadruple from 2014! I think what's the most impressive of all, even more than the over 6 million hits, are the over 1 million pages viewed! I feel that the Handbook Give Away has contributed greatly to these increased numbers. It's getting folks not only to the website, but looking around and reading the material on the website, and that's what we wanted! Thanks for your support. Yes, the Handbook Give Away Drawing will continue!

As you can see, the Ohio Section is very busy, and unlike a lot of Sections in the country, we are moving forward! I am very proud of everyone in the Ohio Section, as that each and every one of you make the Ohio Section strong and vibrant. And YES, we still are the largest Section in the country!

73, Scott, N8SY

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