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## WHAT'S THE FREQUENCY RITTMAN?



**Silvercreek  
Amateur Radio  
Association  
hosts ham radio  
exhibition  
for the public**  
*page 17*

### INSIDE

#### Flooded with concerns

Recent flooding in Rittman prompts former councilman to research catch basins .....**page 2**



#### Teacher takes the stage

Rittman Middle School teacher has the lead in Summer Stage Wooster's production of "Oklahoma!" ... **page 18**



#### Dining for a cause

Corkscrew Saloon Patriot's Bourbon and Cigar Dinner to benefit fallen soldier organization ..... **page 32**



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# Local ham operators invite public to field day

*Annual worldwide exercise simulates emergency conditions to prepare for worst*

By **ELIZABETH SABO**  
*The Post contributor*

**RITTMAN** – Members of the Silvercreek Amateur Radio Association hosted a ham radio exhibition for the public and local operators June 22-23 at the American Legion in Rittman.

The annual field day was a chance for amateur, or ham, operators to showcase their skills in the event of an emergency, as well as educate others on the practicality and usefulness of the exercise.

Gary Shorter, president of SARA, said the club has experienced individuals who function as “control operators” for the radio, which allows unlicensed operators to make contacts with other operators.

Shorter, who has been with the club for nine years and president for the last five, said club’s focus on field day is educating the public on the role and value of amateur radio in the community, encouraging non-hams to consider becoming a ham and helping non-licensed individuals to operate and experience the thrill of radio communication.

Shorter said the day is a great time for club members to have a social time together, operate radio in a different environment then they are used to and pass on their skills to others.

According to Shorter, there are three levels of amateur radio licenses in the U.S. and each higher license gives more privileges to the radio spectrum.

Field day gives those with lower level access a chance to transmit the higher levels under the supervision of the control operators.

Shorter said they had an exceptional turnout this year with over 50 guests, including local dignitaries and many young adults.

“Our club members love sharing their hobby with the public, especially youths interested in electronics and STEM topics,” Shorter said.

Club members spent several hours explaining the setup, helping people make contacts and getting “non-hams” or unlicensed members involved, Shorter said.

Prep, or setup, is done the morning of the event and involves erecting antennas, running coax cables and setting up radio equipment and power sources.

Shorter said many amateurs have “go boxes,” which consist of dedicated emergency equipment ready for deployment at a moment’s notice.

“Our day of setup takes a couple hours, but in an actual emergency, setup needs to be done quickly. Field day is a



Photo courtesy of SARA

**Members of the Silver Creek Radio Association set up an antenna for high frequency operation during the annual field day exercise June 22-23 at the American Legion in Rittman.**

drill for such a reality,” Shorter said.

During the event, the group uses their skills to earn points for how many contacts or transmissions they make during the two-day event with only using their own power, like generators, solar power or batteries. This exercise mimics what it would be like if the community is off the grid electrically.

Shorter said they operated under “5 Alpha,” which translates to five radio stations operating simultaneously through emergency means.

Shorter said that this year’s event was the most successful yet and they received two on-site applications to join the club during the first day.

SARA’s mission is to provide services at low or no cost to its members and the public through the club’s dues, fundraising events and in-kind donations, Shorter said.

Since 1977, members of SARA have served the Summit, Wayne and Medina tri-county area. SARA supports a variety of services for both experienced hams and newcomers, including two high-profile repeaters used for standard communications, public service events, weather and emergency response services. The group also offers license exams, training, technical topic education, public service and more.

In order to become an amateur radio operator, the person must obtain an FCC license, or ticket, to operate a radio transmitter.

### On the cover

Members of the Silvercreek Amateur Radio Association work together to set up the satellite communications antenna. They include, from right to left: Marty Baker, whose call sign is N8XPK; Ken Dorsey, KA8OAD; and Brooker Breece, KD8JNX. Photo courtesy of SARA

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