

ARC-SHORTS

February, 2012

Club Repeaters: 147.315 (PL 107.2), 444.6 (PL107.2), 224.82 (PL107.2), 53.13 (PL107.2), 927.6 (-25Mhz, PL107.2), and 1282.600 (PL 107.2), DSTAR 145.38Mhz, 442.060, and 1284.600

PLEASE NOTE:

We will move our meeting location to the Alexandria City's new Emergency Operations Center at 3600 Wheeler Ave,. Thanks to Erik Parker, KG4DZA for arranging this for us. We will still start at 7 PM. This helps of with our ARES relationship with the City.

NEXT CLUB MEETING

Our next meeting is **February 10th** at the Alexandria City's new Emergency Operations Center at 3600 Wheeler Ave. We will meet in the Community Room on the first floor. Parking is the public lot right in front of the building. **DO NOT PARK ON THE STREET!!!** At 7:00 there should be plenty of spaces.

Last months pre meeting dinner was at La Casta, This month's will be back at ATLANTIS. Food at both places was good, but some miss the variety.

Our program will be the Virginia QSO Party. Last year our club president and a few others went expeditionary and traveled to a county that had no amateurs to provide needed multipliers to others in the party.

JANUARY MEETING – Minutes KJ4FUU

This was our first meeting at the NEW City EOC at 3600 Wheeler Ave.

Treasurer's Report: Checking:\$563, education: \$2,424 Trailer: \$573, Share: \$2,783, Total: \$6,345 (cents not listed)

Our guest speaker, arranged by Erik, KG4DZA was Ms. Joanne Monroe, Director of Emergency Communications who gave us a tour of the new facility and some insight into how the city will more efficiently handle Police, Fire and EMS calls in the future. In addition there was a great deal of discussion on the new radio systems that will be coming soon, ARES is hoping that the City EMS team will come out for Field Day.

Committee Reports:

Training: Starts 3/20, with test after Dayton is over, location to be determined.(See Rich's announcement below)

ARES: New Police/Fire dispatch center opened this week behind the McDonald's on Duke & Quaker. Possibility exists for a presence for the club at the building, possibly moving the

monthly meetings there. The Fire Training Center is not an option.

DSTAR: Not much new, trust server issues, new sites in Richmond, Towson upcoming. K6CLM has activated a hotspot @ Fort Belvoir on 145.650 simplex, hooked to 25B (subject of a future program).

Repeaters: 50, 220 down, 440 card problem suspected, another unit being converted to 220. There is an issue that software for the controller is vaporware. 144, 900, 1300 all up and running.

Webmaster: Up to date, PayPal up and running

Upcoming Events: Hamfests: Winterfest, Timonium. Volunteers needed for GW Birthday 10K run (2/18), GW Parade (2/20), Bull Run Runn (4/14)

Old Business: None.

New Business:

Motion to investigate buying mugs for guest speakers. Carried. (Maybe hats instead?)

Investigating new big sticker for the trailer identifying it.

Investigating buying an HF antenna for the trailer (Tarheel?).

Jeremy proposed an online store for club merchandise, hi-res scan of logo needed.

Motion to buy Tarheel for the trailer (\$500/\$600) vs. Little Tarheel (\$379) made by Jeremy KF7IJZ (withdrawn, referred to committee). Don raised concerns about height, suggested Hi-Q instead.

Motion to form committee to investigate an HF antenna for the trailer (carried).

Motion to remove repeater controller with non-existent software made by KF7IJZ (withdrawn, referred to Tim KT4MV, with Jeremy volunteering to start learning about the repeaters in order to be of assistance). Motion to specifically invite Tim KT4MV for the purpose of discussion of repeater status / plans / future (passed). Rich KA4GFY will contact him.

President's Corner

As we welcome a new (and quite a bit milder) 2012 in, there are plenty of amateur radio activities to keep ARC members involved. We started the new year off with a relocation of our meeting to the City of Alexandria's new Police Department and Department of Emergency Communications (DEC) facility located at 3600 Wheeler Avenue through the efforts of ARC member Eric Parker, KG4DZA, who works in the DEC. JoAnne Munroe, the new Director of the DEC gave us an overview of the center and took ARC members questions and answers on the new facility. Afterwards, we were given a tour of the new dispatch area that will become operational in the near future. All ARC members were very appreciative of the time JoAnne gave to us, and look forward to having our ARC meetings there in the Community Room for the remainder of 2012. On January 27th, six ARC members participated in a ARES drill at the Alexandria Inova Hospital involving the Virginia regional hospital network. This was a good opportunity to assess how well equipment worked in sections of the newly renovated Alexandria Inova Hospital, as well as meet and interact with Inova hospital management involved in the hospital's security and emergency services. Rick, our ARES coordinator,

led the drill, which ran from 9:00 until noon, and utilized both analog and DStar capabilities. On February 4, several ARC members participated in the annual trek to the Richmond Frostfest hamfest, and enjoyed the hospitality and bargains that the Richmond area hams provided. Later in February, ARC members will be providing communications support to the organizers of the George Washington Birthday Celebration, which includes the George Washington Classic 10-K race on February 18 and the parade on February 20. These are just a few examples of the many activities involving amateur radio that ARC members can participate throughout the year, and I look forward to seeing you at many of these and other upcoming events throughout 2012."

73

Marshall

Future Programs

March – Tim –KT4MV –Aviation Communications (Pending)

April – HAARP – Steve Floyd W4YHD (Confirmed)

May – ARRL Dennis Bodsden W4PWF (Confirmed)

June - Field Day

July – D-Star 201 - KI4MQP (beyond the local repeater)

August - ARES/AMSAT/Other??

Sept – MCM – Howard, WD5DBC or Tom, N4ZPT (tentative)

Oct - AMRAD (tentative)

Nov - Elections

Dec – Party

Up Coming Events

GW BIRTHDAY EVENTS

We need volunteers for two events. The 10K run on February 18th. We will meet on Eisenhower in front of the Patent Office at 0730. Operations will be on the 147.315 repeater. Expect to be done by noon.

GW Birthday Parade February 20th. – NEED VOLUNTEERS. Meet at the corner of Wilkes and St Asaph Streets at 10 AM for set up. Move info on set up and assignments later. We will use the 146.655 – PL141.3 for this event. Expect the parade will start at 1 PM and we will be done and heading for a late lunch by 3 PM. In order to conserve parking spaces on site, we will meet at the Fire Training Center parking lot at 9AM and carpool to the start / finish area. The Club

Trailer will be at the start / finish area and we will have a team at the Reviewing stand. If we can, I would like to have APRS trackers on the start and finish of the parade and a display at the Reviewing Stand.

Maps and info on the events are on the GWBirthdayParade website.

Let Rick, N4ASX, know if you can support.

Dayton Hamvention– The Ultimate Hamfest

The Dayton Hamvention has been described by some as “Mecca for ham radio” because if its ham radio related, it will be at Dayton.

Since this is the largest hamfest in the US, if not worldwide, this is the perfect opportunity for the manufacturers to introduce their latest models. I was there at the ICOM booth a few years ago when ICOM introduced the IC-7000 to the world. I have also seen Ten Tec bring out the Jupiter and the Orion. I bought one of the very first ICOM IC-T81 four band handheld radios at Dayton. Every T81 sent to Dayton that year was gone the first day. Five years ago, the entire stock of ICOM ID-880 DSTAR radios was sold out by Saturday. Yaesu sent a run of FT-817s the first year they were out. Within a day, those were all sold out. Same thing for the Kenwood TM D700 APRS radio when it was introduced. Last year, one dealer brought in a pallet full of Chinese made HTs and they were completely sold out by Saturday morning. Elecraft introduced their new KX-3 last year and many people were heard asking when could they buy one. The best part is some of the manufacturers offer discounts on their equipment just for the Hamvention. You become the comparative shopper by going around to the vendors to get their best price on the equipment you want to buy. People are lined up several deep in front of the major vendors' booths to get the newest piece of gear. You can also find out what the manufacturers are up to, they have people there to answer questions about the current equipment and what's on the horizon.

If you are not in the market for the newest equipment, this has to be the largest ham radio flea market anywhere. Everything from loose parts to entire stations is for sale. A local surplus supplier in Dayton sets up a large tent out in back of the Hara Arena. For those hams with a taste for nostalgia, there are rows and rows of old gear. You need tools, there are tools to found somewhere out there. You need antennas, somebody will have them. You need cable, its there. And the list goes on. For that repeater project, there is plenty of surplus commercial equipment available.

For those who are not looking for equipment, the forums are a great place to learn what is going on in ham radio. The topics range from what's going on at the FCC and ARRL to satellites, emergency communications, DXing, kit building, QRP operating and the latest technologies are some of the more popular ones. There are five or six forums going on at one time for all three days from the time the building opens until it closes each day.

Just about every organization connected with ham radio is there. ARRL has a big presence, of course with their very successful EXPO. AMSAT has a large presence as well. The MARS organizations have displays set up. Let's not forget the Radio Society of Great Britain and the

Japan Amateur Radio League. In addition, many ham radio publishers are there. “CQ” magazine, Gordon West, “Nuts and Volts” and Radio Amateur Callbook are there to name a few.

When you put 20,000 plus people into a small area, and most are carrying a radio, finding a frequency to talk to your buddies on is difficult. The first year N4ASX and I went, we could talk to each other on 70 cm with no problem. Ten years later, we were on 23 cm because 70 cm became too crowded. Some of the APRS guys have said the Hara Arena area is so jammed with activity that APRS doesn’t really work. I can’t imagine why.... DSTAR on 70 cm is gaining popularity because of the narrow bandwidth. 1.25 meters is popular as well. By the way, 23 cm still works very well.

While carrying (or wearing) that radio, you can go into a restaurant and nobody will look at you like you are weird (they are all wearing one too). The breakfast bar at the hotel is a great place to meet up with people. Everybody is wearing a hat, a shirt or just a nametag with their callsign on it.

For the kids, ARRL has been sponsoring kids activities at the Hamvention with a lounge area and forums specifically for kids. These have been headed up by Assistant Section Managers for Youth from some of the sections that have one. They have their own frequencies they hang out on and also their own event on Saturday night at a local restaurant.

Some of the other popular events outside the actual Hamvention, are the “unofficial” activities Friday and Saturday nights. An open house in a hotel ballroom or dinners sponsored by DX and contest clubs are very popular. QCWA hosts a dinner as well. If the Hamvention also happens to be an ARRL national convention, there is the initiation ceremony into the Royal Order of the Wouff Hong. I can’t tell you any more than that because it’s a secret society.

One of the best things about Hamvention is the people you meet. There are people from all over the world who travel to the Hamvention. I have seen people from China, India, Australia, Europe and all over North and South America. KI4MWP and I met up with a ham from the UK one year and learned quite a bit about ham radio in Europe. We also decided to stop complaining about \$4.00 per gallon gasoline when he told us what they pay in the UK. While the US dollar was taking a beating on the currency markets, foreign hams came to the US to take advantage of the great deals. So, the vendors did not see a decline in business because of a weak economy.

While gas may or may not be \$4.00 per gallon this year, the best way to go is to travel with a group. Not only does it cut costs by sharing gas, but you get people to talk to for the drive out and back. Of course there is activity on the radio. 146.52 MHz is usually busy. The Mid CARS and ECARS nets on 40 meters are busy. You see lots of vehicles with call letter license plates heading west on I-70.

The biggest logistics issue with something like this is where to stay. Most of us get reservations a year in advance. I block out several rooms with the idea of making the trip a club activity to reduce the cost a bit. Do you see a trend here? Ham radio really is a fraternal activity. Sharing an experience like the Dayton Hamvention helps to bring a group of hams together that lasts long after the Hamvention is over.

One of the non ham radio activities to take in while in Dayton is located at Wright Patterson Air Force Base. Wright Patterson AFB home to the US Air Force Museum. Anybody with even a passing interest in aviation will find this a great place. There are some well known aircraft as well as one of a kind.

If you are interested in going this year, let me know ASAP. I usually order the tickets in April so we have them in time to depart the Thursday before. We really need people willing to drive and split the gas. It's about 1200 miles out and back including whatever running around we do in Dayton.

As for the cost, it works out to about \$160 per person for the room. The gas works out to about a tank of gas per person. With three people per vehicle, that works out to be around \$70, even in an SUV. I have not seen any ticket prices yet for this year, but they have been \$20 for several years, which is good for all three days. In addition, the \$8 bus pass is well worth it. While you can park in the grass (or dirt) lots around the arena, you may need 4 wheel drive and chains to get out if it rains. So, the cost is somewhere around \$260 before you buy food and any goodies at the hamfest. By the way, we have a running contest as to who spends the most over the weekend. I have to admit, I won the title a couple years ago and don't see that being broken for awhile. I keep waiting for someone to buy the high-end ICOM or Yaesu HF radios, or maybe the \$20,000 motorized, collapsible tower. However, you're on your own to get it home.

I tell people the Dayton Hamvention is one of the very few places you can actually see men shopping with a smile on their faces.

73,

Rich, KA4GFY

Spring Licensing Classes

The Alexandria Radio Club is sponsoring Technician and General licensing classes beginning March 20, 2012. Class will run for 10 weeks, with exam night the last class. The cost is still \$50, which includes the book, test fee and classroom materials.

The location is 2331 Mill Road, Suite 100, through arrangements made by Roy, K4AXQ. It's near the Federal Courthouse and the Eisenhower METRO station.

Class starts at 7 PM and ends around 9 PM.

If you know someone looking to become licensed or upgrading, send them our way. Signing up is easy. Email me ka4gfy@arrl.net, phone (703) 969-6615 or sign up through the link on the club web page. If you haven't seen it, check out the announcement on the club's web page.

Upcoming Hamfests

Feb 26 – Winterfest – Sponsored by the Vienna Wireless Society, located at the Annandale Campus of Northern Virginia Community College. This is the first local hamfest on the Virginia

side of the river. The club buys tables to help all of clean out those extra pieces of equipment we seem to accumulate. If you have anything you want to sell, this is a great place to do it.

March 31 – Baltimore Hamboree and Computerfest - Sponsored by the Baltimore Amateur Radio Club, located at the Maryland State Fairgrounds in Timonium. This is probably the largest hamfest in the area. It features new equipment, along with indoor and outdoor flea market space. Note, it's only one day this year.

Contests

Feb 4 & 5 – Vermont QSO Party
Feb 4 – Minnesota QSO Party
Feb 4 – British Columbia QSO Party
Feb 4 & 5 – Delaware QSO Party
Feb 5- North American Sprint, CW
Feb 11 & 12 – Louisiana QSO Party
Feb 11 & 12 – New Hampshire QSO Party
Feb 11 – Fists CW Winter Sprint
Feb 12 – North American Sprint – SSB
Feb 13 – 17 – ARRL School Club Roundup
Feb 18 & 19 – ARRL CW DX Contest
Feb 18 & 19 – AM QSO Party
Feb 25 & 26 – Mississippi QSO Party
Feb 26 & 27 – North Carolina QSO Party

Area Wide Hospital Communcations Test – 27 January 2012

On 27 January 2012, Rick, N4ASX, Ian, N8IK, Marshall, KI4MQP, Don, KI4D and Larry KK4CBL, supported a Northern Virginia wide communications test. This was propped by the installation of a new permanent station at one of the other hospitals.

The installation we have at INOVA Alexandria was put in place about 25 years ago with the antenna on the old roof (highest roof area on the hospital) and the coax running to the Board Room on the ground floor. In 25 years there have been a lot of changes to the Hospital and the Board Room is no longer the emergency operations center for the hospital. Mr. Gavin Latney is now in charge of emergency operations for the Alexandria Hospital and has built an Incident Command Center to coordinate operations in an emergency or disaster.

For this drill we could not use the installed antenna nor could we tap into the antenna used for the 6 meter repeater, so Larry came up with a dual band mag mount mobile which we placed on the A/C unit on the roof and work the drill with that antenna. We had good reports on simplex

out to the Regional Hospital Coordination Center (RHCC) and Fairfax Hospital as well as some of the other hospitals in the area. Repeater coverage was good on 146.91, 147.300 and 448.325.

Other operators were not idle, we checked UHF handheld conductivity between the Incident Command Center and the Emergency Room, Clinic, Board Room and the roof with fair to good results.

We will need to work with the hospital to figure out a way to set up a station and get to the antenna without an impossibly long run of low loss coax. Another suggestion was a small UHF repeater for inter-hospital communications.

ARES to do list includes; correcting Alexandria's station problems, re-engaging with the Alexandria Red Cross and working with the City to find space for a club station.

Social Events

Monday Night Half Price Burgers – There is a group that gets together at Shooter McGee's (Duke and Paxton Streets) on Monday evenings at 6:15 PM. A good burger and soft drink runs about \$9.00.

Visit to Udvar Hazy – Smithsonian Air and Space Museum. Rick, N4ASX, has agreed to organize a visit to Udvar Hazy out near Dullas Airport. Tentative date is Saturday March 3rd. Lets plan to meet at the Fire Training Center parking lot and carpool to Udvar Hazy. They don't charge for entrance to the Museum but they charge \$15 per car to park. Rick can take three in his vehicle.