

# ARC-SHORTS

August, 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

## **NEXT CLUB MEETING**

Our next meeting is **FRIDAY, August 11th** at 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.

Our program will be our own Ex-Newbie, Jeremy KF7IJZ. In the finest tradition he has been one of the hams in our club who has been experimenting with solar power.

## **July Meeting Program**

Our program was provided by Mr. Gary Sessums KC5QCN and the program will be the Military Affiliated Radio System (MARS). Many of us have at one time or another been active with MARS or may have passed MARS traffic.

Gary's program was very interesting and covered the differences between MARS operations and our normal amateur radio operations. One of the items that was not emphasized was the revitalization of Pentagon Amateur Radio club. For those who work in the Pentagon and have time

## **JULY MEETING – Minutes KJ4FUU**

1. Open meeting
2. Introductions: KJ4FUU, pass sign-in roster
3. Treasurer's report: W9TCE, \$20 dues, \$20 DSTAR fund, 50/50 ticket Check: 385, Share: 5140, Trailer: 573, Education: 2238, Total: 8338
4. Secretary's report: KJ4FUU – latest body count
5. Committee reports:
  - a. Training Report – KA4GFY Fall training will be @ 3600 Wheeler Ave, starting 10/09/2012; Technician classes in the fall, General classes in the spring, Extra classes will be on the mentor system (no formal classes).
  - b. ARES – N4ASX Mark Penn/Joe Henderson looking for equipment advice for new EOC on Eisenhower Ave. Hams weren't called during outages because city phones were dead. If you suspect a need, mark up on the repeater and ask! Antenna planning/work at the hospital needed.
  - c. Repeater & remote receivers – KT4MV, KF7IJZ, K4GOR, et al. Location needed for 23cm repeater.
  - d. DSTAR – KI4MWP Didn't lose power. 136 registered entities.
  - e. Webmaster – K4AXQ – ABSENT

6. Upcoming Events:
  - a. IARU HF Championship – July 14<sup>th</sup>  
We are in zone 08.
  - b. CQWW VHF Contest – July 21-22nd
  - c. IOTA Contest – July 28-29th
  - d. August UHF Contest – August 4-5th
  - e. NAQP (cw) – August 5th
  - f. Marine Corps Marathon, October 28th, [www.ncacdc.com](http://www.ncacdc.com) -not “org”
7. Hamfests:
  - a. Berryville Hamfest – August 5th (always 1st Sunday in August)
8. Old Business:
  - a. Ft. Ward Special Event Station—cancelled
  - b. Field Day reports & claimed score – 3772, Ran as 7A for 700 points, 145 75m phone, 200+ 40m phone, 138 20m phone, 116 15m phone, 62 40m cw, 118 20m cw, 41 15m cw, Rich KA4GFY has other details.
9. New Business:
  - a. W9TCE - Ways and Means
  - b. Nominating committee for 2013 club officers
  - c. Holiday Party confirmed for 12/14 at Mango Mike’s
  - d. Need a price on 5 hats
10. Net Controls: July 19: \_\_\_\_\_N8IK\_\_\_\_\_
  - July 26: \_\_\_KK4CBL\_\_\_\_\_
  - August 2: \_\_KA4GFY\_\_\_\_\_
  - August 9: \_\_W9TCE\_\_\_\_\_
  - August 10: next meeting
11. Last call for 50/50, then pull winning ticket – Winner: Bob K4RKB

Speaker: Gary Sessums, KC5QCN - MARS

Let Rick N4ASX know your program suggestions.

August program – Jeremy KF7IJZ on solar power

September program – Art Blank, Dxpedition to Midway Island

October program may be about DSTAR

November – Club Elections

December – Club Dinner

### **CLUB ELECTIONS – Passing to torch**

One of the things that make this club special is the comradeship and the contributions to the club made by all of its members. Some clubs are content to are content to let an inner circle of old graybeards run the club. This club has for as long as I’ve been a member believed that new blood and a regular change in its leadership allows for a more relevant club. In order to support this idea, we have a rule in our bylaws that limits officers to two consecutive terms. We have not

restricted the positions experience or license class. Our current president tells me that we have four volunteers to take over and this is great. It's hard to find folks who are willing to step up, but it's vital to the health of the club. When we hold our nominations and you would like to run for an office or if you have a nominee and that nominee is willing, do NOT be afraid to make a race of it.

We hold our elections at the November meeting. Please plan to participate. One of my Elmers once said that if you don't participate then you're NOT ALLOWED to complain!

### **President's Notes**

The Holiday/Christmas party will be at Mango Mikes in December, and it looks like we have four members interested in running for various offices at the moment. It would probably be nice to mention that elections are in November and those members that are interested in running can contact any of the club officers.

With the Dog Days of August now in force, this is a good time to for ARC members to think about what is involved in being prepared for emergency situations. With the region having already experienced a sustained loss of power that lasted from one to six days in some areas, and the peak period for hurricanes rapidly approaching,

I encourage ARC members to review preparedness/contingency plans for themselves and their families. For example, do you have enough non-perishable food stocks and water that can last through a sustained power outage? Do you try to maintain adequate fuel in your vehicle to ensure that if you needed to leave the area due to a large power outage you would be able to get to a gas station that had power for its pumps? Do you have sufficient cash on hand if you are not able to access a local ATM due to power issues? If you no longer have a wired (landline) phone and depend on a wireless phone, have you thought how you would use your radio's simplex (for VHF/UHF) or HF capabilities to relay information in the event that the wireless phone infrastructure is heavily taxed or unavailable? Some of the recent severe storms that we have had have definitely driven home the point that having a preparedness plan is a very good idea, and having a communications plan on how to relay information in the event that normal communications channels are non-functioning is a definite added bonus.

I am looking forward to the very timely presentation we will be having at our August meeting by Jeremy, KF7IJZ, on how one can setup and use solar power to provide power as the situation warrants. I encourage ARC members to plan to attend this meeting and see how this form of preparedness may be of benefit to you and your family in the event the area sustains another lengthy power outage. See you there.

73

Marshall

### **ARES**

Our President makes some very good points in his notes. The first action all of us need to do in an emergency is to take care of ourselves, our family and our property. ~~Once you have assessed~~

your own status, then the next step is to determine what you have ready to go and if you can support ARES operations.

Our process for being ready is simple, when you know that we have a possible emergency and you have taken care of yourself, your family and your property, then get your gear ready and mark up on the 147.315 repeater and let the EC or AECs know that you're ready and what limitations you have.

The City has asked us for a list of equipment that should be installed in the new Emergency Operations Center (EOC), the DEC (3600 Wheeler Ave.) and at Alexandria Hospital. A committee has been working to prepare the list for the City which will include HF/VHF/UHF/D-Star and Packet-APRS at the EOC and VHF/UHF/D-Star at DEC and the hospital. The reason I bring this up is that we will need volunteers to operate these stations when we are asked.

### **D-STAR Support – A request**

Many of us have invested in D-Star capable radios, but we have to think about the support of the D-Star system. One of our members has invested thousands of dollars in the system and it provides a great new capability for our D-Star equipped members. Some of us have donated one month's cost of the DSL internet access for the D-Star gateway. I ask you, next time you fire up your D-Star radio, to make a donation to the D-Star support account. I really is not fair for one member to spend the money out of his pocket to support this capability solo. The last time I sent out a request, the response was underwhelming. I would suggest that a one month donation for those of us using D-Star would not be unreasonable. I think it's about \$70. If you find this to be beyond your means, then something to show your support would be much appreciated.

73 Rick / N4ASX

### **Upcoming Contests**

Aug 11 - Maryland/DC QSO Party – For those of us in Virginia, the exchange is just the state. This should be an easy one, with most of the contacts on 80 and 40 meters.

Aug 11 and 12 – CW portion of Worked All Europe. Exchange is the RST and serial number.

Aug 18 - North American QSO Party – Phone portion. Exchange is your name and state.

Aug 19 – Digital portion of the Rookie Roundup. Newly licensed hams are the big prize. Exchange is a little complicated. Both names, year licensed and state.

Aug 25 – Hawaii QSO Party. Exchange is the RS(T) and state.

Aug 25 – Kansas QSO Party – Exchange is RS(T) and state.

Aug 25 – Ohio QSO Party – Serial number and state.

## **Upcoming Hamfests**

Aug 19 – Carroll County Tailgate Fest. Located at the Carroll County, MD Agricultural Center, 706 Agriculture Drive, Westminster, MD, 21157. The entrance is located just off the intersection with Smith Avenue. Nice venue for a hamfest.

Sep 1 – Shelby, NC Hamfest. This is the granddaddy of all hamfests. The Charlotte, NC area is about a 5 hour drive down I-95 and I-85.

Sep 15 – Virginia Beach Hamfest. Located at the Virginia Beach Convention Center, 1000 19th Street. Its easier to think of as right off I-264, because its easily seen as you head toward the oceanfront. Its also the Virginia Section Convention.

## **Classes**

We have a new venue this fall. The location is the Alexandria Police Department HQs, the same location as our meetings. In fact, the very same room. The plan is to do the Technician class in the Fall and the General in the spring.

If you know somebody who wants to get their license, or you're reading this and aren't licensed, come on down! The cost is \$50, which includes the textbook, test fee and materials.

## **The Basic Ins and Outs of QSLing with DX stations by Rich Adamy, KA4GFY**

For those of us who chase DX, getting a confirmation from that rare country makes the actual QSO that much better. But, how do you go about getting that confirmation? Notice I said confirmation, rather than card. That's because hams are confirming QSLs with cards as well as electronically.

The first method is called "QSLing direct." This is sending the DX station a card via mail. This can get somewhat expensive because you often have to pay the overseas postage BOTH ways. As bad as it sounds, that can be the only way to get a QSL card from an overseas station. From their perspective, you would go broke too sending a card to each overseas station they worked. So, that's why they ask US hams to pay both ways. Many hams will use International Reply Coupons. These are available from the USPS and are good for postage in nearly every country.

One other note, many overseas hams will ask for "green stamps." That's slang for US dollars. Generally, one green stamp equals one dollar. Personally, if someone asks me for green stamps, I don't need their card THAT bad. Unfortunately, some DX stations that ask for green stamps end up keeping the cash and not returning a card.

If you do decide to go that route, be sure NOT to put either callsign on the envelope or anything else to indicate its one ham sending a QSL card to another. Believe it or not, some foreign postal

service workers are not as honest as ours and have been known to open the envelope and take the cash. They may or may not re-seal the envelope and continue it on its way. So, a word to the wise.

A real popular way to QSL via the bureau. CW ops will often say QSL via buro for short. The QSL bureau is a very cost effective way to exchange cards. The QSL bureaus will collect cards going to various countries and take advantage of sending cards in bulk to each country. ARRL members can send their cards to the outgoing bureau for a very nominal fee. ARRL puts all the cards going to a particular country together and sends them to their incoming bureau. For cards coming in to the US, the outgoing bureaus in most countries sends the cards to the incoming bureaus here in the US. Clubs in the US sponsor the incoming QSL bureaus. For example, the Sterling Park ARC sponsors the incoming bureau for 2 letter prefixes in the 4th call area and the Mecklenburg ARC in NC sponsors the single letter prefixes for the 4th call area.

I know you're asking, "So, how do I get my cards?" It's pretty easy. You'll need to keep envelopes on file with the bureau. I will often look for the QSL Bureau folks at hamfests in the area to buy my envelopes. For a couple of dollars, I get three envelopes with 1st class postage. When there are about 6 to 8 cards in the envelope, the QSL bureau sends the envelope. You can also send the envelopes to the bureau. The 6 x 9 envelope is what they use. You put your callsign in the upper left corner of the front and your name and address in the middle, with a 1st class stamp on it. When the bureau sends the last envelope, they will mark the envelope with "Last Envelope."

One thing to keep in mind is that not all countries accept cards from our outgoing bureau. They may not have an incoming bureau. Also, the incoming bureau may not accept cards for hams who are not members of their country's national ham radio organization.

Some overseas hams have stateside "QSL Managers." Hams in the US will volunteer to be an overseas ham's representative for QSLing US and Canadian hams. Many callbook programs will list the QSL manager for DX stations. Also, websites such as QRZ and EHam have them listed as well. The stateside QSL manager gets a copy of the DX station's logbook and is able to send out QSL cards on the DX station's behalf. You send the QSL manager a card and the manager will verify the contact and send a card back. You will have to pay for the postage both ways with an SASE, but its cheaper than paying the overseas postage both ways. The QSL manager will stamp the card in such a way its hard to counterfeit. In the eyes of the awards sponsor, its as good as getting it directly from the DX station.

Another option is electronic QSLing. ARRL sponsors their Logbook of the World (LoTW) and there is another electronic QSL service called EQSL. ARRL's LoTW is free to upload QSOs and the overall number of QSLs in the database is literally in the millions. ARRL's DX Century Club, Worked All States and V/U Century Club awards are supported. The CQ magazine WPX award was added recently, with more CQ awards to be added soon. The cost to use LoTW is when you apply for an award. The cost is comparable to using QSL cards and a card checker. Since the QSOs are matched in the database, they are considered checked by ARRL, so you can apply for an award anytime you are ready. Many of the big contest stations use LoTW for QSLing. Upload your QSOs to LoTW after a contest and see how many matches you get.

Some hams prefer to use EQSL for electronic QSLing. The problem is, those matches are not accepted by ARRL or CQ Magazine for their awards. It may be a good way to confirm contacts, but if you're chasing paper, it might behoove you to use one of the other methods.

So, there you have a basic understanding how QSLing works. In this day of electronically confirming QSLs via Logbook of the World, I still enjoy getting envelopes from the bureau. The pictures on some of the cards are definitely worthy of displaying in the shack. Its often said that exchanging the QSL card is the final courtesy of making a contact.

73,  
Rich, KA4GFY

### **ARES Notes:**

### **Future Programs**

August - Solar power systems – KF7IJZ

September – DX program

Oct – D-Star 201 - KI4MWP (beyond the local repeater) – Marshall DeBerry KI4MWP

Nov – Elections

Dec – Party

---

January 2013 – New Year Business meeting – New officers, budget, plans and programs

Washington's Birthday operation.

February 2013 –

March 2013

April 2013

May 2013 –

June 2013 – Field Day prep meeting

July 2013

August 2013

September 2013

October 2013

November 2013– Club Elections

December 2013 – Club Party

Possible Programs: AMRAD/AMSAT/DX/VHF Contesting/ Stealth Operations/ ARES (city official?)/ Trailer work session/City Radio System/ FAA program/ Newbies on the air/ We will also try to get one or two of the National Weather Service SKYWARN classes so that members who wish to can qualify as spotters.

### **CLUB Christmas Dinner**

The Holiday/Christmas party will be at Mango Mikes on our regular meeting night December 14th (second Friday). , and it looks like we have four members interested in running for various offices at the moment

Marshall

Mango Mike's <http://www.mangomikes.com/mangos-alexandria.html> on Duke Street which we've been to for a couple of years. Price range is \$25-30.

### **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 30 PM. A good burger and soft drink runs about \$9.50.