

ARC-SHORTS

September, 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, September 14th** 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 on DX expeditions or DXpeditions presented by Mr. Art Blank, WA7NB. At Field Day we gained a new member who was part of the DXpedition to Midway Island. Midway is not very big and is at the far west end of the Hawaiian Island chain. A great deal has been written about the battle of Midway during World War II, but you don't realize how important Midway was until you see how close it was to the rest of Hawaii. Some of us have seen the DX video and it is one of the more interesting. Think of this kind of thing as Field Day away from home.

August Meeting Program

Our August program was presented by Jeremy KF7IJZ on solar power systems for portable operation. Jeremy did a great job on presenting the methodology behind deciding what size system you need to run your portable system. There is obviously a lot more stuff out there than most of us realized. Another interesting thing was the advances being made in battery and solar cell technologies.

August MEETING – Minutes KJ4FUU

Open meeting

Introductions: KJ4FUU, pass sign-in roster

Treasurer's report:

Checking: 435, Trailer: 854, Edu.: 2238, Share: 5142, TOTAL: 8670

Rick N4ASX added \$60 to the treasury from Berryville sales

Secretary's report: Nothing to report

Committee reports:

Training Report – KA4GFY

10/9 – 12/11, at 3600 Wheeler Ave. 3 or 4 students so far, Technician class this time,

General in the spring. Eric states that the city may publish something about the training.

ARES – N4ASX / KG4DZA AND KI4MWP met with the city regarding radio equipment purchase (antennas, feedlines, power supply, radios?). HF station desired, not critical. City concerned about cost, but they asked. List needs to be prioritized.

Marine Corps Marathon 10/28, sign up at www.marinemarathon.org.

Repeater & remote receivers – KT4MV, KF7IJZ, K4GOR, KA4GFY
220 sort of operating, 900 working, Craig K4GOR working on the 220 with Tim
KT4MV. Rick N4ASX will test Mirage amps. 440 on the air one day, then audio dropped
out, maybe a dirty pot? Too hot to work on them right now. Intermod problem on 440
with 147.315 + commercial radio, Rich KA4GFY will contact TMARC about possibly
inverting the 440 pair. Crystals cost \$100, paid for with repeater funds.

DSTAR – KI4MWP – Nothing to report

Webmaster – K4AXQ - Look at additional links; check-ins, attendance now on the site.
Will post net script soon.

Upcoming Events:

Marine Corps Marathon, October 28th, www.ncacdc.com

Old Business:

Berryville hamfest last Sunday – big crowd, fewer vendors than in the past.

New Business:

W9TCE - Ways and Means

Nominating committee for 2013 club officers – Craig K4GOR is on the committee,

Jeremy KF7IJZ nominates Craig for chairman, seconded, approved by acclamation.

Holiday Party - December 14th at Mango Mike's

Hats: \$17/hat; gathering an order; Cameron K6CLM moves that we buy 30 hats,
seconded, approved by acclamation.

Net Controls: August 16: __KF7IJZ + Simplex test__

August 23: __KA4GFY__

August 30: __N4ASX__

Sept 6: __KJ4FUU__

Sept 13: __W4EDF__

Sept 14: next meeting

Last call for 50/50, then pull winning ticket

Mrs KF7IJZ pulled the ticket, KF7IJZ wins, uproar ensued.

Speaker: Jeremy KF7IJZ – solar power

Jeremy still has not answered the big question of the night: “How much is this going to cost?” :)

Adjourned.

Future Programs

September program – Art Blank, Dxpediton to Midway Island
Future Programs
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

Programs for 2013

We hope to have a 2 programs on SKYWARN, One will be a run down on how amateur radio supports the National Weather Service and the other will be a Skywarn spotter basic class. Terry Price, W8ZN has helped a few of us in the club with tower work and he is very much involved with the K8GP Grid Pirates VHF/UHF/SHF contesting club. I have asked him to come talk to us.

It’s been a while since we’ve had a power company person come talk to us about tracking down noise, so I will try to set that up.

I have asked Terry Hines N4ZH to give us a program on antenna modeling

I have not had any feedback from AMSAT but maybe they may have something for us.

AMRAD is a possibility.

Let me know what YOU would like to hear. The alternative might be a DX video or How many ways you can mess up your wire dipole.

73 Rick N4ASX

CLUB ELECTIONS – Passing to torch

Craig Church has volunteered to be a officer nomination chair. If you are interested in running for office, please send Craig a short note at GOR.Craig@verizon.net.

So Far the nominees are

Tom KJ4FUU – President

Jeremey KF7IJZ – VP

Steve Wagner W8RJH – Treasurer
Larry – KK4CBL – VP/Tres/Sec
Bobby – KK4CKJ – VP/Tres/Sec

My guess is that all will be allowed to fill in a ballot and they can vote for any nominee for any position. The positions above were identified by those who were nominated as jobs they would be willing to hold. Larry and Bobby are open for any position. Our bylaws require that you be licensed for two years to be president.

Nominations can be taken from the floor, but the nominee must agree to be placed on the ballot.

President's Notes

With summer coming to a close and cooler days hopefully ahead, now is a good time for ARC members to assess conditions on your antenna setup, either the simple vertical or dipole or the large tower array you've got in the back 20 acres! I mention this because lately in the various magazines, such as CQ and QST, there have been a number of interesting articles on constructing pretty straightforward antennas well within the construction capabilities of most of hams. Both magazines September editions have good articles on constructing a portable 20 meter antenna using a used AT-271/PRC collapsible whip (CQ) or a portable go-kit 70cm/2m antenna that is easily deployable (QST). Although building radios from scratch can be a bit challenging these days with the use of surface mount parts, antenna construction is something that is pretty easy to get your hands around and construct from fairly basic, everyday materials. Plus, there is the great knowledge of the practical you gain versus the theory that you learned in how antennas actually work under real world conditions. It has often been said that the most important piece of a good amateur station setup, other than the operator's grey matter, is how good an antenna setup the station has put together. All the fancy filters and waterfall displays don't do the operator much good if you can't be heard by that distant DX station you've been trying so hard to get into the logbook. The window for getting things outside in shipshape condition may be small this year if you believe the Hagerstown almanac--they're predicting a snowy winter for the DC area this year after relatively nothing for the last two years. So now is the time to get outside, take a look at your antenna, make sure all the joints are tight and the coax is well sealed, and perhaps think about how you might build something that can assist you in pulling in those weak signals you've been hearing on the horizon. And then, when those snowflakes are drifting down, you'll be able to answer that distant station you've heard faintly so many times, with a strong "I've got you in the log, OM! 73!"

73

Marshall

ARES

This is the time of year for severe storms, so keep your gear ready and think about how you would stay warm and safe in the event of a storm. While it's been in the 90's most of the last month, it's not too early to think about winter storms as well.

Upcoming Contests –

Sept 1 and 2 – Colorado QSO Party. Exchange is your callsign, name and state.

Sept 2 and 3 – Tennessee QSO Party. Exchange is your callsign and state.

Sept 7 and 8 – QCWA Fall QSO Party. or those of us licensed longer than 25 years. The exchange is callsign, year licensed, your name and QCWA chapter (or state if not QCWA member).

Sept 8 and 9 - Worked All Europe DX Contest. Exchange is a signal report and a serial number. You can earn extra points by reading back a portion of your log when the other station asks for “QTCs.”

Sept 8 and 9 – Arkansas QSO Party. Exchange is a signal report and state.

Sept 8 – Ohio State Parks on the Air. Exchange for us is “Virginia.”

Sept 8 through 10 – ARRL September VHF Contest. All VHF and UHF bands. Exchange is your grid square.

Sept 9 – CW portion of the North American Sprint. Exchange is both callsigns, serial number, name and state.

Sept 15 – South Carolina QSO Party. Exchange is the signal report and state.

Sept 15 – Washington State Salmon Run. Exchange is signal report and state.

Sept 16 – Phone portion of North American Sprint. Exchange is both callsigns, serial number, name and state.

Sept 29 – Texas QSO Party. Exchange is signal report and state.

Upcoming Hamfests –

Oct 7 – Columbia Amateur Radio Association (CARAFest) – Located at the Howard County Fairgrounds in West Friendship, MD. Its right off I-70 and Rte 144. Nice hamfest and easy to get to.

Oct 21 – Mason-Dixon Hamfest. 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.

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.

GRE PSR-800 Scanner

While at this year's Dayton Hamvention, I purchased a GRE PSR-800 handheld scanner to replace my trusty Radio Shack PRO-106. I like the features on the PRO-106, but was interested in listening to the Time Delay Multi Access (TDMA) systems that are starting to come online.

After a quick study of the owner's manual, I found out the radio will pretty much program itself once you tell it where you are. By the way, the owner's manual is on a CD, like many other manuals these days. The CD also includes the programming software.

So. I put in my zip code, 22310, and the next thing I know, it has loaded Fairfax County and Washington METRO transit PD. A little more reading and I figured out how to load in more systems. So, I'm listening to the local activity (Alexandria, Fairfax and METRO) and notice some of the scanlists are fairly generic. The default is grouping by police dispatch, police tactical, fire dispatch, fire tactical, etc. I didn't care for that arrangement. In addition, I have to admit I like the LED telling me what service I'm listening to (i.e., blue for police, red for fire and EMS, etc). I didn't see an easy way to set this up via the front panel.

A little more reading and I figured out I can tell it which talk groups I want to listen to. This is a step in the right direction. After consulting with a few other PSR-800 owners in the club, I figured out I could download the memory to my computer, set it up the way I want and put it back. This is what I was looking for! Worse case, I would have to start from scratch again, which is really no big deal.

The impressive thing about this scanner is the ENTIRE Radio Reference database for the US and Canada is stored on an SD card. Not only does it include the public safety frequencies, but National Weather Service transmitters and even ham repeaters are in there. All you have to do is tell the scanner what services you want to listen to. Being a ham, I was very interested in which repeaters came up based on my zip code. It did find the ARES repeaters and the SKYWARN repeaters in the area.

There are no "memories" on this scanner like many of the older ones. The only limitation is how much data is in the SD card. The standard SD card has 2 GB on it. If you are concerned about running out of space on the card, just get a larger one.

Programming is very easy with the software. I was able to create a separate scanlist for each jurisdiction. It makes more sense to me because you pull data from the internet by locating the jurisdiction and then the system. If you travel around, just put each locality into its own scanlist. With 200 scanlists available, I doubt most of us will be running out of "space" anytime soon.

Once a week, GRE updates the PSR-800 files based on updates on the Radio Reference website. You connect the cable to the scanner (do NOT turn it on, ask me how I know). Open the programming software and click on the option to update. The software does the rest. It will update anything you have in your current scanlists and import any new frequencies, talk groups, etc, for the entire database. All you will have to do is set the parameters for the LED on any of the new frequencies or talk groups in your scanlists.

This has to be one of the simplest scanners I have seen in a long time. The price may be a showstopper for some, but keep in mind this scanner does A LOT. It will listen to analog, most digital formats and does extremely well with trunking systems. In other words, it's a good scanner for this area. Before you ask, I'm still using the Pro-106 too.

73, Rich, KA4GFY

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.