

# ARC-SHORTS

NOVEMBER 2020

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.  
: DMR IS UP AND RUNNING 442.4125 +5Mhz Color Code 1.

PLEASE USE OUR REPEATERS.

## **Next Meeting**

Due to the Corona Virus, our next meeting will be on ZOOM. This has worked out well and has as many participants as we have had in our in-person meetings. Encourage others to attend We are also coming to the end of the year and that means that we have to nominate new club officers and vote in November. We have term limits, and this allows new ideas and to share the work of running the club. We can make exceptions to by-laws. This year our treasurer has served two years, but given the COVID-19 issues, many would like to have Richard, KW4UJ, to stay on for another year.

Don, KI4D, has done an outstanding job as president and he has a few ideas that may require changes to the by-laws. He may bring them up at our next meeting.

## **Last Meeting**

Our speaker on October 9<sup>th</sup> was Steve, W4SHG, the manager at HRO in Woodbridge and HRO's national sales manager. Steve covered how many of the new HF radios interface with our computers to operate in digital modes and he also covered some of the software that makes these mods more friendly. We, in this area, are lucky to have a 'Candy Store' close by. Many states are not so lucky.

Don, KI4D, also held a leadership meeting on the 16<sup>th</sup> and we should hear more about that at the next meeting.

## **Presidents Corner**

On October 16<sup>th</sup> we notified club members about the passing of Roy Wright (K4AXQ) our webmaster and public information officer (PIO). Roy was 79 when he died on October 14, 2020 at Virginia Hospital Center, Arlington, VA from multiple health issues. He was a longtime resident of Alexandria, VA; but grew up in Galax, VA and

attended the University of Virginia earning a degree in Electrical and Electronics Engineering in 1964. Roy later became a career intelligence officer. Subsequently, as a natural innovator and entrepreneur with core Intelligence tradecraft skills, he shared his discipline and intellect with many small business start-ups, becoming cofounder or senior advisor. Roy was a vigorous lifelong learner of new science and technology, constantly pursuing learning, including continuing education (CE) on-line studies. As a volunteer, he served as technical advisor to many organizations, including the Smithsonian Institution. He remained active in a multitude of avocations throughout his life including airplane piloting, amateur radio licensing, and webmaster for many businesses and volunteer organizations. He was an active member of Mount Vernon Unitarian Church and a longtime dedicated member of the Alexandria Radio Club. Cunningham Church Life Celebration Funeral Home of Alexandria is handling arrangements for Roy. Ted (W9TCE), Ian (N8IK) and Don (KI4D) are assisting Roy's family with ham radio equipment arrangements, and other matters. To assist Roy's family with his estate, a public auction for his ham equipment is planned by ARC.

Virginia continues to be under a state of emergency based on COVID-19. Based on Executive Order 68 as amended, the latest COVID-19 guidance from the state of Virginia, it is still "Safer to Stay at Home" with advice to continue teleworking if possible, wash hands regularly, maintain six feet of physical distance when outside of home, and get tested immediately if you have COVID-19 symptoms. Although many of the legal restrictions have been lifted under Phase III of opening, the Tidewater region of Virginia has remained under continuing restrictions because of COVID-19 outbreaks. Given the mixed set of indicators concerning reopening the economy and continued spread of COVID-19 in some states, Alexandria Radio Club leadership has not elected to recommend resumption of in-person club activities; we will continue with our virtual meetings using Zoom.

At the November 13th monthly meeting of the Alexandria Radio Club voting will take place for the annual election of officers and for other matters. According to club Bylaws, each member shall have one vote on any issue that comes before the membership, provided that the member's dues are paid and current. Zoom technology does not allow sufficient capabilities to quickly ascertain membership of those in attendance for voting purposes. For this reason, only currently paid members of our Club will be invited to the November meeting via Zoom. For attendance at this meeting, we are asking everyone to review their membership status and to make sure annual dues are current by November 10th. If you are uncertain about your membership status, please contact the Club Treasurer at [treasurer@w4hfh.org](mailto:treasurer@w4hfh.org). We prefer membership dues payment by PayPal on the Club website, but checks may be sent to Alexandria Radio Club, PO Box 30721, Alexandria, VA 22310-8721. You do not have to have a PayPal account to pay via PayPal. On October 16th, the Club leadership group met to discuss planning for the November meeting and other matters. The club leadership group consists of elected officers, committee chairs, and presidents emeritus. At this meeting a consensus was developed on a set of proposals for presentation to the Club general membership for consideration and voting at the November meeting, including a slate of Club officers for the coming year, the Club Annual December meeting under COVID-19 precautions, and other issues.

This month we are again delighted and fortunate to have as a new club member Jonathan Pruett (KM4NNQ). Please welcome him.

ARC recorded Zoom meetings with featured presentations are located at <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1MG9VUqKOWeoWEWt0oBwychbzh4qILqbl?usp=sharing>.

The ARRL is urging all members to file individual comments opposing this proposed fee. Obviously, this applies to all amateurs who oppose a fee for amateur radio licensing. The deadline to make your voice heard is November 16, 2020. The reply comment deadline — that is, the deadline for comments on comments already filed — is November 30. See <http://www.arrl.org/FCC-Fees-Proposal> for more information, and the ARRL guidelines for filing comments on the FCC fee proposal.

### Scheduled Activities and Presentations for 2020 updated as of November 6, 2020

- January 10th – MEETING, 2020 Plans & Programs, Membership Dues
- February 1st – FROSTFEST, Richmond, VA
- February 14th – MEETING, VA QSO Party, Gordon Miller ( NQ4K)
- February 17th – George Washington Day Parade Participation
- March 10th – License Classes begin (Ends May 5)
- March 7th – St Patrick’s Day Parade
- March 13th – (CANCELLED) MEETING, AREDN, Joe Porcelli (KT3I)
- March 21-22nd – VA QSO Party Weekend
- March 29th (CANCELLED) WINTERFEST, Annandale, VA
- April 8th – (POSTPONED INDEFINITELY) FIELD DAY 2020 planning committee kickoff (John Marshall Library)
- April 10th – ZOOM MEETING, Alexandria CERT, Dr. Marjorie Windelberg
- May 8th – ZOOM MEETING, WINLINK, Greg Butler (KW6GB)
- May 15-17th – (CANCELLED) HAMVENTION, Dayton, OH
- May 16th – HAMVENTION QSO Party
- June 12th – ZOOM MEETING, FIELD DAY 2020 final briefing
- June 21st – ARC (STAY SAFE) License Class FCC Exams
- June 27-28th – (STAY SAFE) FIELD DAY 2020 Weekend
- July 10th – ZOOM MEETING, AMSAT, Paul Stoetzer (N8HM)
- August 2nd – (CANCELLED), Berryville HAMFEST, Berryville, VA
- August 14th – ZOOM MEETING Ed’s Twinlead Antennas, Dr. Ed Fong (WB6IQN)
- September 11th – ZOOM MEETING, SDR Trends, Bob Nagy (AB5N)
- October 9th – ZOOM MEETING, Ham Radio Outlet, Steve Gilmore (W4SHG)
- October 25th – (CANCELLED) MARINE CORPS MARATHON

You Are Here

- November 13th – Members Only ZOOM Meeting, Year in Review, Elections
- December 11th – Meeting, Christmas party

Please stay safe with masks and keep up with your social distancing.

73 Don, KI4D

### **ARES**

As winter comes on, a few items to consider. Change your clock and smoke detector batteries. If you keep a go kit, think about operations in colder weather.

Batteries of all kinds don't like cold. Check their charge states. You may want to add cold weather gear, hand warmers etc to you go-kits

If your vehicle has not been serviced now is a good time. Also, if you keep emergency gear in your vehicle, good time to check it out.

If you are an ARES volunteer but have not registered with ARES CONNECT, VA please do.

Training – If you have not done IS-100, 200, 700 and 800, please take some time to complete these FEMA classes. You may also want to look at the ARRL classes.

### **ELMER'S INPUTS**

With COVID-19 many of us have spent more time with our stations. Lots of questions came up on VHF/UHF range which was covered in last month's ARC SHORTS. The best way to get more range is to put the antennas up as high as you can. Use low loss coax. You would be AMAZED at how far 5 watts will go with a decent antenna up in the air and without losing signal through cheap coax.

Some antenna fundamentals regardless of the band

1 – Antennas are like the strings on a music instruments. They work well at one frequency. Or for multi-band antennas, key frequencies for each band. To have them work off frequency you need to think about some way to adjust the match.

2 – Smaller antennas have a higher gain and less efficiency. An example is the mobile whips on HF. They tend to match in a very narrow sub-band and because they are electrical short (below  $\frac{1}{4}$  wavelength) they tend to not be efficient.

3 – Antennas are affected by ground proximity. If you want to radiate up and down as in Near Vertical Incident Skywave (NVIS) then putting the dipole or horizontal antenna close to the ground directs the signal skyward. There may also be a large change in radiation resistance, so a matching network may be needed. Vertical antennas use the GROUND as the second half of the dipole. A good ground makes the antenna work well and a poor ground really hurts efficiency.

In our area, the more  $\frac{1}{4}$  wave radials the better. A minimum of 4 per band. SO if you put up a Hustler 5BTV, you want 4 each  $\frac{1}{4}$  wavelength radials for 75 meters (64'), 40 meters (34') 20 Meters (16.5') and 15 meters ( as 15 is a 3<sup>rd</sup> harmonic of 40 meters you don't need radials). And 10 meters (8.6") All can be tied to the ground side of the antenna mount and then to the coax outer braid.

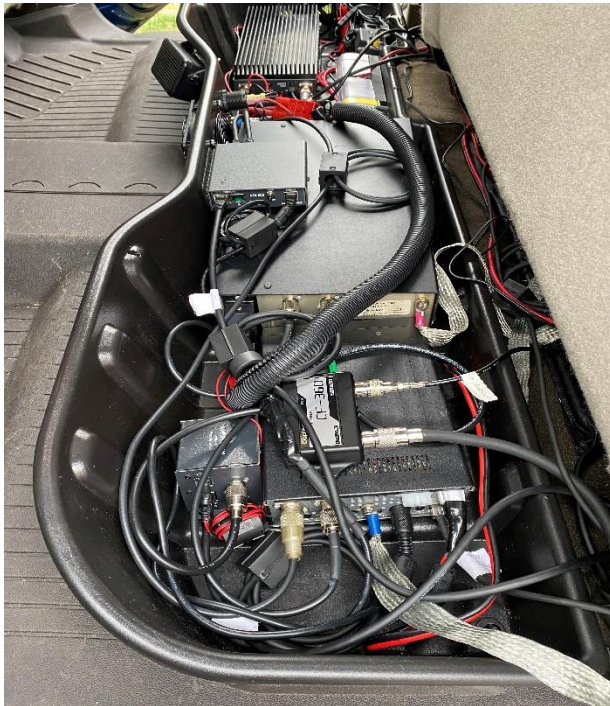
4 – Random wire antennas can work, but remember you need to have a good tuner and your pattern will be somewhat unpredictable.

I recently talked to Jack, W4JJ and he told me he had improved his mobile HF station with a stronger antenna mount.

### Mobile Capability:

#### HF, VHF, and UHF

- Icom IC-7100 exciting an ALS-500M amplifier (HF/VHF/UHF)
  - o Scorpion SA-680 screwdriver antenna covering 10 Through 80 Meters
  - o Diamond 6 Meter monoband antenna
  - o Mirage B-5018-G, 160 watt VHF amplifier
- Icom ID-5100A Deluxe Mobile - 2m/70cm 50W D-Star Transceiver
- Icom ID-1 1200MHz Digital Transceiver





I want to thank Jack W4JJ for sharing his pictures. Lots of amateurs don't get into running mobile stations or even home stations that are this capable.

73 Rick  
N4ASX

## **Hamfests –**

The spread of COVID-19 (AKA Corona Virus) has put a major damper on hamfests.

As of November 1, 2020, the Santafest in Cheltenham, MD is still on the calendar. Zit's sponsored by prince George's County ARES/RACES. Here is the link:

<http://www.pgares.org/>

With the ongoing COVID-19 situation, be sure to check the websites to make sure the hamfest has not been cancelled. This may be a lean year for hamfests, or any other activity where people gather in large numbers. Check any hobby/activity and we are all going through the same issues.

The Vienna Wireless Society's Winterfest scheduled for March 14, 2021 has already been cancelled.

Here's hoping 2021 will be a better year.

## **Training –**

I am exploring the idea of doing a General Class on-line for those newly licensed folks who would like to upgrade from Technician to General. If you are interested in upgrading, please contact me at [ka4gfy@arrl.net](mailto:ka4gfy@arrl.net).

I am in the process of learning how to do exams on line. It's not as easy as it sounds. One online exam system looks very promising. Another is slightly complicated on the technical end, but much more involved on the paperwork side.

Being able to offer remote exams gives us another tool in the toolbox. Another alternative may be the "drive-in" exam.

The makers of the Flash Player software announced they would no longer support the software after December 2020. The ARRL Exam Maker program runs on Flash Player, so ARRL announced that the current version would be the last. ARRL has suggested an alternative which I am working on.

## **Contests –**

- Nov 7 thru 9 – ARRL Sweepstakes, CW. Exchange is the other station's call, serial number, class, year first licensed and ARRL section.

- Nov 21 thru 23 – ARRL Sweepstakes, SSB. Exchange – see CW above.
- Nov 28 and 29 – CQ Worldwide DX Contest, CW. Exchange is RST and zone. We are in zone 5.
- Dec 12 and 13 – ARRL 10-meter contest. Exchange is RST and state.
- Dec 20 – ARRL Rookie Roundup, CW. Exchange is Name, 2-didget year you were first licensed and state.

Every Sunday evening at 8 PM local time, the K1USN Radio Club sponsors the “Slow Speed “Contest.” The exchange is similar to a QSO. See the rules here: <http://www.k1usn.com/sst.html>.

Don't forget, be sure to send in your log within 7 days after the contest ends for all ARRL sponsored contests. ARRL now uses a web application for contest log submissions. Here is the link: <http://contest-log-submission.arrl.org/> Be sure to convert your file to Cabrillo format before submitting. Most logging programs support the Cabrillo format.

REMEMBER to support the CLUB'S score for contests by providing Ian, N8IK your info (Name, Call sign and Grid Square location) and submit your scores for the contests you play in. If the contest asks for a club affiliation, the Alexandria Radio Club is on the list of contest clubs. Contesting is one way we show that we are using our frequency allocations.

Contests may not be your thing, but contests are a great way to show outside interests we do use our valuable spectrum. By showing we use our spectrum, other services will have a hard time proving that we don't use our spectrum and it's up for re-allocation to someone else.

Contests can also be a great way to become introduced to HF communications. While it can be intense, pick the contest and jump in. Most contests have a limited exchange so it is usually easy to get what the other station needs.

State QSO parties are a great introduction to contesting. Most are low-key and the exchange is limited.

Speaking of state QSO parties, there is now a state QSO party challenge. You can start accumulating multipliers by submitting a log in any state or provincial QSO party to [3830scores.com](http://3830scores.com) [QSOParty Groups.io.forum](http://QSOParty.Groups.io/forum) and [State QSOParty.com](http://StateQSOParty.com).

There was some good news about the solar cycle. ARRL reported the Royal Observatory of Belgium determined the solar minimum between Solar Cycles 24 and 25

occurred in December 2019. For the next few years, we should see improved propagation on the HF bands.

### **Repeaters –**

The club repeaters are all up and running. We are still in the process of configuring the DSTAR server and resolving any issues. Once the server is placed in service, we should have full use of the DSTAR repeaters. They are working in local mode.

The DMR side is working normally with access to the DMR servers.. If you use the DMRVA codeplugs, they have updated codeplugs on their website with the new DMR repeaters added since early this year for many of the popular handheld and mobile DMR radios. The codeplugs include more than just the DMRVA system repeaters. Their website is <http://www.dmrva.org/>

We have resumed (semi-regularly) the follow-on net on one of the other repeaters after the Thursday net on the 2-meter analog repeater.

As always, ham it up and get on the air.

73, Rich, KA4GFY