

ARC-SHORTS

December 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

Our next meeting would normally be our annual Christmas Party. Due to COVID-19 that won't happen, but Don may come up with something different.

Last Meeting

ARC Meeting Minutes
November 13, 2020

Club officers update, the members of the Alexandria Radio Club voted to re-elect the following members in their current positions for a second term Donald Lewis (KI4D) as President, Mark Bonanno (KM4GML) as Vice President, William Wilson (KM4KLK) as Secretary and Richard Morani (KW4UJ) as Treasury.

There was some special concession made this year due to the Covid-19 pandemic, our treasury has completed a two-year term as of December 31, 2020. A majority of our members voted to extend this position to a third year due to the pandemic.

The following members: Rick Bunn N4ASX, Richard Adamy KA4GFY and Harry Jones N4CWP were voted by the majority of our members to be given a Lifetime Membership in the Alexandria Radio Club due to their continued dedication and support of the Alexandria Radio Club. Each of them has contributed forty years of service.

The majority of our members has agreed we should update our By-Laws too allow for more than a two-year term so as to maintain continuity in the year of a pandemic. Our By-Laws will be update for the year of 2021.

Web Hosting

Due to the loss of our web master Roy Wright K4AXQ-SK, Ian Keith N8IK has assumed the responsibilities as web master. He has moved all rights to access the ARC web site so as to continue updates and changes as necessary. If you have the skills to assist as a backup in supporting the ARC web site, please contact Ian Keith N8IK.

Each of the committees provided and update on the status of their area and each report was accepted as given.

73 William Wilson
KM4KLLK – Secretary

Presidents Corner

As you know on October 16th 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. 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 shortly.

Virginia continues to be under a state of emergency based on COVID-19 and has recently increased restrictions because of increasing infections, state-wide. Based on Executive Order 67 as amended, gatherings are now limited to 25 people, with some specific exceptions. The latest general COVID-19 guidance from the state of Virginia is that 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 Aside of home, and get tested immediately if you have COVID-19 symptoms. Given the mixed set of indicators concerning reopening the economy and continued spread of COVID-19, 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 held via Zoom tele video, voting took place electing officers for 2021, with the exception of Club Treasurer. Club members unanimously elected Don Lewis (KI4D) as President, Mark Bonanno (KM4GML) as Vice President and William Wilson (KM4KLLK) as Secretary. Although our serving Treasurer was willing to continue as Treasurer, he was not elected mainly because he has already served two years, which is a limit established by club Bylaws. No other person volunteered to become Treasurer. As a result, the club Board proposed modifications to the Bylaws to allow club members with a majority vote to extend the office terms of club officers beyond two years. The proposed Bylaws modification language was introduced at the November 13th meeting. During the meeting, club membership approved recommended wording changes to the proposed Bylaws modifications, which were duly incorporated. According to Article II, Section 2.01, paragraph (c) of the Club Bylaws, a written copy of the revised proposal to change the club bylaws was made available to all members within one week after the November meeting. At a club Board meeting on December 4th, comments from two club members concerning the proposed Bylaws changes were considered, resulting in a minor change to the proposed modifications to the Bylaws. The modified Bylaws will be presented for a membership vote at the January 8th monthly meeting. A copy of the Bylaws modifications is attached.

On December 4th, the club leadership group met to discuss planning for 2021 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 range of issues including the types of programs and activities being planned for 2021. The Board welcomes any ideas from club members for programs and activities in 2021. Please send your ideas to president@w4hfh.org. The agenda for the December 2020 meeting was also established.

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 January 8th 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 January 1st. If you are uncertain about your membership status, please contact the Club Treasurer at 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.

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

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

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

73 Don, KI4D

Presidents Corner

ARES

We are making progress on the city's Emergency Operations Center (EOC). At present, the two VHF/UHF radios have been connected to the antennas on the roof of the EOC and tested. The city also will provide three new laptop computers with Windows 10 and we will install the amateur radio specific software.

The software list is: RMS EXPRESS (WINLINK 2K), HyperTerm, RT Systems programming software for the radios, N3FJP logging program, APRSpoint (APRS client), FLDIGI, FLRIG, VARA, VARA FM, Radio manuals. I hope to get MS office installed by the city, but if not, we can use open office. If you have any other requirements, please let me know.

Addition EOC installations will include a third VHF/UHF antenna to cover 220MHz. An Alinco DR-235Mk III to cover 220Mhz, and an Alinco DR-06T Mk III to cover 6 meter FM.

If you have volunteered on ARS CONNECT please check the site for activities and other useful information once a week.

There has been a question about the difference between ARES and RACES. ARES is a sub-organization of the ARRL and offers support to various served agencies. ARES has no governmental relationship other than Memorandum of Understanding with those organizations. RACES "IS" a governmental construct. RACES or Radio Amateur's Civil Emergency Service was established as part of the FEMA/Civil Defense programs and the state and local governments assign a Responsible Officer or RO to manage RACES stations in their jurisdictions. This is NOT to be confused with RACES INC. Which is a private organization that claims to run RACES in Northern VA. In the City of Alexandria, our MOU states that the Alexandria ARES EC is also the RACES RO.

I bring this up because this confusion can hurt the operation of amateur radio in support of emergencies, when someone claiming to be THE RACES RO challenges the operations of ARES at a time of emergency.

Some time, when we are allowed to meet in person, I will start collecting pictures for ARES ID Badges and forms for the mandatory background checks by the City.

Training. While there is no requirement for training to join Alexandria ARES, Volunteers do need to complete FEMA IS-100 as a minimum to work in shelters, or city EOCs. This takes about 30 minutes to complete. There is also a training plan with levels of accomplishment assigned. If you don't have the task book, please let me know and I will send you the PDF.

We did have a RED CROSS drill on November 14th but it consisted of sending a single WINLINK e-mail using the RED CROSS 213 form. Several of our volunteers did send that form. To them MANY THANKS.

DRILL SUPPORT NEEDED

On December 16th (yes, it's a weekday) the INOVA Alexandria Hospital has requested ARES support for a drill. They are operating their emergency command center as a precaution when their remote patient monitoring system is upgraded. So, this is a good time for them to do their annual drill. The scenario for the drill is a communications outage where they will go to their backup. Amateur radio (ARES) will provide communications links to the Alexandria City EOC, Mt. Vernon Hospital and Fairfax Hospital. Later in the day they will run a similar drill at Mt. Vernon Hospital that will need communications with Fairfax and Alexandria.

Those who can work this drill will assemble at the Alexandria hospital visitor's entrance at 8AM and final directions and assignments will be made at that time.

If you can participate, send an e-mail to Rick N4ASX (Alexandria ARES EC) at N4ASX@ARRL.NET.

73
N4ASX

ELMER'S INPUTS

Lots of new hams are trying to expand their amateur radio activities. Most start off with a 2 meter or dual band (2 and 70cm) VHF/UHF handheld radio. They soon find out that even with 5 watts, the range is limited. Next step is to get a better antenna and like many this should be feed with coax and up as high as you can get it. The Ed Fong J pole antennas help and have some gain. Remember that VHF/UHF is line of sight. Roughly 4/3 the optical line of sight range over average terrain.

Eventually, you will want to move to a mobile radio with more power, better receiver, but that will require a power supply (most of these radios run on 12 -14 volts. If you get a radio that runs

as high as 50 watts you will need a 20 amp capacity power supply. You will also need that external antenna. Still, you're on VHF/UHF and that limits your range and options. Buy mobiles can be expensive, but you can find radios that are as much as 20 years old that will do everything you need for FM. A recommendation if you are not ready to upgrade to General Class but want to talk around the world the DMR or D Star options are good. If you live in a restricted location, the DMR or D-Star antennas are small and can be hidden.

Once you upgrade to General Class, you will get the itch for High Frequency (HF) radio. This adds great new ability, but it's a different world. NO CHANNELS, no repeaters, and lots more people to meet and many more modes of operation. Unlike the internet, you NEVER know who your going to talk to or for how long. Some like to chase DX other like to find rag chew nets and still other lurk. Again, New HF radios can run from just over a \$1000 and up to \$10,000. If you plan to operate on the lower HF bands remember that you will need an antenna and that a $\frac{1}{4}$ wave is $300/\text{Frequency in MHz} / 4 * 3.28$ feet. So, 75 meters (3.5- 4MHz) is 64 feet for a quarter wave so 128 feet end to end for a dipole.

As sunspots get better you may want to try the upper bands 20 meters is THE DX band and the dipole is 33 feet end to end. When things get good a 10 meter antenna is only 17 feet end to end. On the lower bands you many need an antenna tuner. At 100 watts not expensive, but if you decide to run 500 to 1500 watts then you will need a tuner that can handle that power level and that is EXPENSIVE. For starters, I recommend new Generals start on 40 meters (64 feet end to end for the dipole), 20 meters for DX. Later you can look at other antennas and other bands. The other thing to remember is to look at older radios. Most HF radios going back to 1990 will have digital readouts, computer interfaces, dual VFOs, Memories and may have digital signal processing (DSP) and put out 100 watts. Incidentally, I run two Ten Tec radios both were marketed in 1985 and have exceptionally good receivers and all the bells and whistles you need. Kenwood's on TS-430S, 440S, 450S, 830S, 930S, ICOMs IC-706MKIIG is a great little radio and provides 160 Meters to 70cm. Kenwood's TS-2000 is an incredible radio and can be purchased for less than a \$1000.

Hamfests –

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

With the ongoing COVID-19 situation, be sure to check the websites to make sure the hamfest has not been cancelled. This has been 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 Santafest scheduled for December 12, 2020, has been cancelled. The Richmond Frostfest for 2021 has been cancelled. The Vienna Wireless Society's Winterfest scheduled for March 14, 2021 has already been cancelled.

Here's hoping 2021 will improve as the year goes on.

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

I am in the process of learning how to do exams on-line. I suspect on-line exams will be done more often than in-person exams, at least for the foreseeable future. I have an idea to combine the two methods once we are allowed to use the meeting room.

Being able to offer remote exams gives us another tool in the toolbox. Another alternative may be the “drive-in” exam during warmer weather.

Contests –

- Dec 12 and 13 – ARRL 10-meter contest. Exchange is RST and state.
- Dec 19 – Radio Amateurs Canada Winter Contest. Exchange is RST and serial number.
- Dec 20 – ARRL Rookie Roundup, CW. Exchange is Name, 2-didger year you were first licensed and state.
- Jan 9 and 10 - North American QSO Party, CW. Exchange is name and state.
- Jan 16 and 17 – North American QSO Party, SSB. Exchange is name and state.
- Jan 16 thru 18 – ARRL January VHF Contest. 50 MHz and up. Exchange is 4-character grid square. Most of us are in FM18.

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>.

Every Tuesday at 0100 (8 PM EST for us) is the Worldwide Sideband Activity Contest. Exchange is RS and age group (OM, YL, Youth YL or Youth). Here are the rules: <https://wwsac.com/rules.html>

Don’t forget ARRL Kids Day on January 2, 2021. Exchange is name, age, QTH and favorite color. Here is the link to the rules: <http://www.arrl.org/kids-day>

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 QSOParty Groups.io.forum and State QSOParty.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. I want to give a big shout out to N8IK, KT3I and KI4MWP for their work on the DSTAR server. Immediately after N8IK and KT3I installed the server, we had the Echotest function and the main trust server was seeing our activity. A few days later, we could connect to reflectors. The DSTAR repeaters are seeing a lot of activity.

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