

ARC-SHORTS

September 2021

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 ZOOM meeting will be Friday September 10th at 7PM. A ZOOM meeting invite will be sent out soon. The program will be provided by Howard Cunningham, WD5DBC, who is the head of the Marine Corps Marathon Amateur Radio Support Group. Howard is also the ARES District Emergency Coordinator for Virginia District 7 covering Northern Virginia. Howard will be talking about the Marine Corps Marathon amateur radio operation. If you would like to work this event and have not signed up, you should do that now! It is one of the most important amateur radio events of the year.

Last Meeting

August 13, 2021

Rick Bunn (N4ASX) provided us an update on the Alexandria Amateur Radio Emergency Services (ARES), which is a public service and disaster support group made up of licensed amateur radio operators (also called Hams). ARES has been mobilized in the past and provides supplemental communications when needed to link the involved agencies.

Rick is always looking for a few good Hams to join us when an emergency arises. If you wish to join ARES, please contact Rick at N4ASX@cox.net.

The FEMA class IS-0100 is recommended for all volunteers.

Objectives:

Upon completion of this unit, students will be able to:

- Identify the five major ICS functional areas
- Describe the role of the Incident commander.
- Describe the selection of and transfer of command between Incident Commanders.
- Identify the position titles associated with Command Staff.
- Differentiate between incident command and incident coordination.

The following committee reports were presented and accepted by the members.

ARES/Races (N4ASX)
Membership (KW4UJ)
History Project (KI4D)
Repeaters (KA4GFY/N8IK)
AREDN Project (KT31/N8IK)
Training/Education (KA4GFY)
Trailer (KA4GFY)
Webmaster (KW4UJ/N8IK)

Presidents Corner

Presidents Corner

Regular in-person club meeting events are still subject COVID-19 restrictions at our normal meeting location, the City of Alexandria Police Headquarters building. With improving news about COVID-19 in June, the board contemplated temporary in-person meetings at the Dunn Lorton Fire Station; however, the rapid emergence of the Delta variant ended that consideration. Until we are notified that COVID restrictions are lifted and that we may resume our regular meetings, we will continue with virtual club meetings using Zoom.

The August 13 monthly featured Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES) presented by Rick Bunn (N4ASX). Rick discussed the mission of the Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES) and some local history, stressing the importance of participation in ARES by licensed club members who have a sincere interest in public service communications during disasters or emergencies.

ARES is a program of ARRL, the national association for amateur radio, and is comprised of organized, trained, and identified amateur radio operators who augment and support vital communications on behalf of the public through partner agencies and organizations during emergencies and disasters. The presentation can be viewed at:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/18YmiHE_uty3uzwNOgtknG205qgr53uAi/view?usp=sharing.

Rick is the ARRL Emergency Coordinator (EC) responsible for the ARES group in support of the City of Alexandria working with community officials, the City Emergency Operations Center (EOC) and the Virginia Section Emergency Coordinator (SEC), who has responsibilities for a larger area. As EC Rick has led Alexandria Radio Club ARES participation in emergency planning, preparedness, and response for support of the Alexandria EOC, including exercise support. Rick Bunn (N4ASX) has been a member of the Alexandria Radio Club for over 40 years, and has the honor of being selected as a Life Time Member of the Alexandria Radio Club for his many contributions to the club.

We continue our interest in Tech-talks, we are currently seeking to schedule the next talk. Tech-talks topics resulted from a club survey conducted this past spring with club members. All sessions are open to all hams. These talks will be conducted monthly during the coming months. The purpose of these sessions is to provide an opportunity for in-depth conversations, including Q&A, on a variety of ham radio topics. These sessions also follow up on ideas from club members desiring to build on their knowledge of ham radio. Thusly, it is also hoped that these sessions will build on club mentoring efforts for our newest hams and will serve to promote their continuing interest in club activities. Finally, it is

hoped that these sessions will lead to more interest in operator license upgrades enabled by increased knowledge of ham radio.

In preparation for hurricane Ida remnants, on September 1 Alexandria Radio Club offered to participate in any potential activation of the City of Alexandria Emergency Operations Center (EOC). Club ARES members stood by on the club 2 meter repeater waiting to be called upon; although eventually the EOC was not activated.

This month, we are again delighted and fortunate to welcome new club members. Since last month Mervin Schoolfield Jr (TBD) and Robert Wilson (KO4KGC) have joined. Please welcome them when an opportunity arises.

Most ARES Safety vests were delivered during Field Day weekend for those who attended. The remaining vests are being held pending delivery. Club polo shirts have also arrived and were made available at delivery points, the remaining shirts are pending delivery.,

The list of upcoming club activities and presentations planned for 2021 is listed below. The Club also welcomes any ideas from club members for programs and activities in 2021. Please send your ideas to president@w4hfh.org.

Scheduled Activities and Presentations for 2021 updated as of Aug 9, 2020

- January 8th – ZOOM MEETING, Pentagon Radio Club MARS Operations by Gary Sessums (KC5QCN), 2021 Plans & Programs, Voting Meeting
- February 6th – (CANCELLED) FROSTFEST, Richmond, VA
- February 12th – ZOOM MEETING, VA QSO Party, Gordon Miller (NQ4K)
- February 15th – (CANCELLED) George Washington Day Parade Participation
- March (Date) – License Classes begin, Ends May (Date)
- March 6th – (CANCELLED) St Patrick's Day Parade
- March 12th – ZOOM MEETING, How to Learn and Have Fun with Morse Code by Long Island CW Club, Howard (WB2UZE) and Jim (W6JIM)
- March 20-21th – VA QSO Party Weekend
- April 7th – ZOOM MEETING, FIELD DAY 2021 planning committee kickoff
- April 9th – ZOOM MEETING, West Mountain Radio, Mark Siegesmund (W9WMR)
- April 24th (VIRTUAL) WINTERFEST, Annandale, VA
- May 14th – ZOOM MEETING, Antenna Tuners: When do you need one, and how do they work? Barry Feierman (K3EUI)
- May 21-23rd – (CANCELLED) HAMVENTION, Dayton,
- June 11th – ZOOM MEETING, FIELD DAY 2020 final briefing
- June 26-27th – FIELD DAY 2021 Weekend
- July 9th – ZOOM MEETING, AREDN, Joe Porcelli (KT3I)
- August 1st – Berryville HAMFEST, Berryville, VA
- August 13th – ZOOM MEETING, ARC ARES, Rick Bunn (N4ASX)

You are HERE!!!

- September 10th – ZOOM MEETING, Marine Corps Marathon (MCM) 2021 – Howard Cunningham

- October 8th – ZOOM MEETING, DX Engineering, Tim Duffy (K3LR), Officer Nominations
- October 31st – MARINE CORPS MARATHON
- November 12th – MEMBERSHIP MEETING, Elections
- December 10th – MEETING, Christmas party

Proposed Tech Roundtable Topics for 2021 (Panel of experienced club members and others discussing their experiences with Q&A.)

1. Ham Activities for New Technician Class Hams
2. Handy talkies (HT) options, what kind, how much? Pros and Cons
3. Building a Go-kit for ARES
4. QRP (Reduced transmit power out)
5. Portable ops (rigs, batteries, antennas, etc.)
6. Mobile installations
7. Starter Base Station Options
8. Stealthy Antennas for city dwellers
9. QSL Cards
10. Getting Started with ECHOLINK
11. Getting Started with Amateur Radio Satellite Communications
12. Parks on the Air for Beginners
13. Working with Repeaters
14. Using NVIS
15. Working with Digital modes
16. Radio Scanners for Beginners
17. Packet Radio
18. Raspberry Pi Applications
19. Virtual Ham Shack Tour
20. Ham Shack Hotline
21. Installation and Logging with N3FJP
22. Matching Antennas to Feedlines
23. Propagation and Sunspot Cycle 25
24. "Time" for new amateur radio operators

Please get vaccinated and stay safe with masks and social distancing.

73 Don, KI4D

ARES

Last month I presented an overview of ARES in Alexandria. And I made of point of RECRUITING new volunteers. I've had a few new volunteers as a result and I will thank them in the next column. I am working on NEW Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). Thanks to those who have volunteered. If you are a volunteer and not updated your FSD-98 this year, please send N4ASX an update.

Alexandria is a small place geographically, some of our club members live in Fairfax or

Arlington. Each of those jurisdictions has it's own ARES group. I live in Fairfax, but I've been a member of Alexandria ARES since 1978 when I joined the Alexandria Radio Club. At the time I DID live in the city. My current address, while technically Alexandria, is in the county, but due to my previous affiliation I have continued with Alexandria ARES.

Thank said, If you do not live in the City, but still want to support Alexandria ARES, we are happy to have you join. No real experience is needed. As stated before, there is a 'Task Book' that provides all you need to learn at any level of ARES management.

The only requirement is that you have an amateur license and sometime in the near future, you take FEMA IS100.

A few years ago, the city purchased 10 ICOM ID-51A plus handheld D-Star radios with the intent of providing these radios to CERT in an emergency. The problem was that, one must have an amateur radio license to use the radios. The radios were turned over to Alexandria ARES to be used as loaner radios by ARES volunteers. That said, I still have 6 of these radios that can be loaned out to ARES volunteers as long as they are active ARES members, check in to one Alexandria Radio Club net a month, and, once a year, bring the radios to a meeting so they can be check against inventory. If you are an ARES volunteer and do not own a D-Star radio, you can call me and arrange for the loan of one of these radios.

MARINE CORPS MARATHON

This event is kind of short notice. The event needs about 135 operators and all most operators need is a dual band HF and batteries. If you can volunteer, go to MCMHAM.ORG and MARINEMARATHON.COM and sign up under HAM VOLUNTEER. This needs to be done soon due to security requirements. There are many repeaters along the course so if you have a good antenna and about 8 hours' worth of batteries you'll have what you need. You will get more info if you volunteer. We will hear more from Howard WD5DBC at the next meeting.

ELMER'S INPUTS

As a result of my recent computer failure, I had to reload a bunch of programs. One was WINLINK EXPRESS. This program needs to talk to a Terminal Node Controller (TNC) then to a radio to send and receive packet radio traffic. The Kenwood TMD-700 and TMD710 radios have built in TNCs which allow for ease of installation. WINLINK EXPRESS has set up scripts for most TNCs. BUT testing can be a problem as if the setup is not correct with regard to the COMM port set up, it just fails and does not give a hint of why. In the older version of WINLINK EXPRESS (RMS EXPRESS) there was a pull down called SIMPLE TERMINAL. It is no longer within WINLINK EXPRESS, but it IS in the program download. Go to programs files under your C: drive and you can find it in the WINLINK EXPRESS files. Then send tie .exe program to the DESKTOP. Be sure to tell it to RUN AS ADMINISTRATOR. This is a simple program and allows you to see what is coming from the TNC. Make sure to check ECHO ON so you can see what commands you send to the TNC.

A few common commands:

MYCALL – If you hit return it will show you the call or SSID assigned to the TNC. If it comes back NO CALL you need to type MY CALL your call here and return
MON - short for monitor allows you to see what is incoming. MON ON should be used
MALL or Monitor All should also be ON so type MALL ON. Once you have these commands run you can SEE all the traffic on a give frequency. I then put the radio on 144.39 and see the packets containing APRS traffic. If you hear packet noise but no decode then you need to check your COMM PORT settings. If you see garbage, then check the comm port baud settings, usually 9600 between the computer and the radio, not to be confused with the radio's packet speed setting which should be 1200. This program can be used to send peer to peer packet traffic. To connect to another station type C other station SSID/call sign. The TNC will try to connect and will tell you when it does. Then it should go automatically to Convers (Conversation mode) and you can type back and forth with the other connected station. When your done type D for Disconnect.

Hope this helps.

73 Rick
N4ASX

Review of the Bridgecom BCM-220 mobile -

My nearly 20-year-old Ten Tec T-Kit model 1230 220 MHz transceiver started having some minor hiccups and I decided it was time to think about replacing the Ten Tec. Unlike equipment for 2 meters, 70 cm and even 6 meters, there is not a lot of equipment available for the amateur 1.25-meter band.

So, I decided on the Bridgecom BCM-220 mobile. When it arrived, the very first thing I noticed about it was this radio is very well made. The bottom half of it heat sink. The radio itself is the top half. I have yet to feel much heat after a fairly long QSO. The microphone is not the flimsy little thing we get on most amateur radio equipment, it reminds me of the commercial-grade transceivers I used to see while working in the 2-way radio shop.

A quick read of the manual and I was on the air. I programmed the Alexandria Radio Club's 224.820 MHz repeater. The receive audio is loud and clear. Transmit audio was reported to be crystal clear. The radio is a one-piece unit with a front facing speaker. So, no issues with covering up the speaker by mounting it from the top or bottom. It also features an external speaker jack in case you want to use a speaker in the vehicle or shack.

The BCM 220 has 4 transmit power settings, 5, 10, 20 and 30 watts. In addition to narrow and wide FM voice, it will also do data in the 218 to 219 MHz band. It has 250 memories which will store all the parameters for each memory.

The front panel is very basic, 4 buttons and 2 knobs. Each button has one function. The knobs are for on-off/volume and channel selector. No menus to deal with. The microphone has 12 buttons on the keypad along with 3 below for switching between the VFO and memories, as well as moving the channel up and down. The keypad buttons also allow you to enter a frequency directly in the VFO. That's a nice feature.

I bought the optional programming software and cable because I like to be able to load a pre-built file into the radio before I make a cross-country trip somewhere. Manually loading dozens of memories, the night before heading out of town is not my idea of a good time. The software is very intuitive.

If you are looking for a way to get on 220 Mhz from home or the vehicle, look seriously at the Bridgecom BCM-220.

Rich, KA4GFY

Hamfests –

The spread of COVID-19 (AKA Corona Virus) has put a major damper on hamfests for 2020 and early 2021. However, with people getting vaccinated, there are more hamfests showing up on the calendar. Let's hope this continues.

The Tidewater Hamfest (a.k.a. VA Beach) is returning this year on September 11 and 12. It will be held in a new location, The Ambassador Club in Portsmouth. The address is 364 Peninsula Avenue in Portsmouth. Here is the link: <http://virginiabeachhamfest.com/>

The St Mary's Amateur Radio Association annual Tailgatefest will take place on September 25 at the Hollywood Volunteer Fire Department in Hollywood, MD. Here is the link: <http://www.k3hki.org/2021-8th-annual-tailgate-fest/>

The Columbia Amateur Radio Association's CARAFest will be on October 3rd at the Howard County Fairgrounds. Here is the link: <http://carafest.org/>

Training –

With our last class in the books, time to start planning for the next one. Our next class is scheduled to start October 5 and end December 7. That leaves everybody enough time to get their new amateur radio equipment for Christmas. If you know of someone who has always wanted to become a ham radio operator, send them to our website to sign up for the class.

We have been hearing some of recent graduates on the air. Be sure to welcome them to ham radio.

- September 11 – Ohio State Parks on the Air. Exchange is state.
- September 11 and 12 – Alabama QSO Party. Exchange is RST and state.
- September 11 through 13 – ARRL September VHF Contest. Exchange is 4-character grid square.
- September 12 – North American Sprint- CW. Exchange is other station's call, your call, serial number, your name, your state.
- September 18 and 19 – Iowa QSO Party. Exchange is RST and state.
- September 18 and 19 – Texas QSO Party. Exchange is RST and state.
- September 18 and 19 – Washington State Salmon Run. Exchange is RST and state.
- September 18 – Wisconsin Parks on the Air. Exchange is state.
- September 18 and 19 – New Jersey QSO Party. Exchange is RST and state.
- September 18 and 19 – New Hampshire QSO Party. Exchange is RST and state.
- September 25 and 26 – CQ Worldwide DX Contest, RTTY. Exchange is RST + CQ Zone + State
- September 25 and 26 – Maine QSO Party. Exchange is RST and state.
- October 2 and 3 – California QSO Party. Exchange serial number and state.
- October 9 and 10 – Nevada QSO Party. RST and ARRL section.
- October 9 and 10 – Arizona QSO Party. Exchange is RST and state.
- October 9 and 10 – Pennsylvania QSO Party. Exchange is serial number and ARRL section.
- October 9 and 10 – South Dakota QSO Party. Exchange is RST and state.
- October 16 and 17 – New York QSO Party. Exchange is RST and state.
- October 17 and 18 – Illinois QSO Party. Exchange is RST and state.
- October 18 through 22 – ARRL School Club Roundup. Exchange is RST and class (Individual, Club, School).
- October 24- North American Sprint, SSB. Exchange is other station's call, your call, serial number, your name, your state.
- October 30 and 31 – CQ Worldwide DX Contest, SSB. Exchange is RS and CQ Zone. We are in zone 5.

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 0000 (8 PM EDT Monday 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, 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](http://QSOParty.Groups.io/forum) and [State QSOParty.com](http://StateQSOParty.com).

Repeaters –

The club repeaters are all up and running. The DSTAR repeaters are seeing a lot of activity. We have been linking the 70 cm repeater to Reflector 001C, the world-wide reflector and the 2 meter repeater to Reflector 030C, another busy reflector. If you want to link to another reflector, be sure to unlink the repeater first and then link to the reflector of your choice. All we ask is you unlink the reflector you were listening on when you are finished listening.

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 some of the new DMR repeaters. The codeplugs include more than just the DMRVA system repeaters. Their website is <http://www.dmrva.org/>

DMRVA has announced on their website they will be partnering with the Hospital Emergency Amateur Radio Service (HEARS). HEARS operates linked repeaters primarily located in Southwest Virginia, North and South Carolina. New talkgroups will

be added to the DMRVA system and at least one talkgroup will be deleted. We will have the details as soon as we see them.

In case you missed it, N8IK sent out a "Handy Intro Guide to DMR." It does a great job explaining some of the terms you hear about DMR.

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.

Ian, N8IK, has started a Wednesday night DSTAR net on the 145.380 MHz repeater at 8 PM. We have linked the repeater to Reflector 62B so members and former members outside the local area can join in. Some time ago, I asked the folks who maintain the lists of DSTAR reflectors to create a Virginia perma-link reflector. Many other states have them. Be sure to put Reflector 62B in your DSTAR programming.

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

73, Rich, KA4GFY