

ARC-SHORTS

December, 2013

Club Repeaters: 147.315 (PL 107.2), 444.6 (PL107.2), 224.82 (PL107.2), 53.13 (PL107.2) Down for replacement, 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 **DECEMBER 13th** at MANGO MIKE'S on Duke Street. It's the annual Holiday party for the club. Ian N8IK is our MASTER OF CERIMONIES and you need to RSVP to him so he has a head count. Mango Mike's website. <http://www.mangomikes.com/groups.html> pick off the Duke or Queen menu and let me know if your bride is joining us.

I forgot to ask this at the last meeting, but in past years, we have brought an inexpensive (< \$20) to the party, and anyone who brought a gift could pick one out of the pile when it was their turn.

Is anyone interested in continuing this tradition? Anyone planning on attending the party, please e-mail me, either on this list, or to kj4fuu@arrl.net.

Thanks,

-- Tom Kirby KJ4FUU, President

Thanksgiving

The holiday season begins with Thanksgiving. At this time I am thankful for the friendships we acquire as part of the club. For most of us it's who we talk to on the radio and not what we talk about that makes amateur radio an interesting hobby.

OCTOBER MEETING MINUTES

ARC Meeting, was held on October 11th . The program was presented by from Tom Dundzila KK4NMP, who presented a great program on how HF radio was used in the past to provide education for kids living in the Australian outback. Many of us are still trying to figure out what the radios were and who made them?? Tom, thanks for a very entertaining and informative program.

President's Corner

Another year has come and gone with hopefully all of us continuing to enjoy and learn from the hobby of amateur radio. We had opportunities for public service that went well (or at least better with us than without us), such as the George Washington's Birthday 10K Run and Parade, the Marine Corps Marathon, the Bull Run 50 Miler, and Boy Scouts Jamboree On The Air, to name a few.

We've had radio contests with our club well represented by veteran HF operators, the Virginia QSO Party being a big one. We had a greater than normal number of operators who stayed overnight for Field Day, including a number of members participating in their first Field Day, and hopefully, getting interested in HF operations.

I'm looking forward to next year, and hope that we can keep up the participation level. The Virginia QSO Party is in March, and the February program will be a representative from SPARC, the club that sponsors the party. Also in February are the George Washington's Birthday events, for which we need operators. I'm also hoping that we can have a Newbies On The Air event next year, when the weather is warmer, but not yet like a typical DC summer. I have several portable antennas, with vertical, loop, and end feds to choose from, along with my very portable Argonaut VI and LiFePo battery setup, so I can help a little with the event, even though QRP is generally not recommended as a starting point (but I did anyway).

I hope to see everyone at the Christmas Party.

73,

-- Tom Kirby

President, Alexandria Radio Club

For those with VHF/UHF capability, please keep George Washington's Birthday on you calendar. On the Saturday before, we help out with the GW 10K Run, and there is room for members with HTs to assist.

Also, on the holiday itself, the city of Alexandria has the GW Birthday parade and asks the club members to assist. Aside from one mobile setup at the reviewing stand, and the radios in our trailer, the rest of the radios are HTs. We radio changes from the "final" version of the order of march from the marshaling areas to the trailer, so they can transmit the revised file to the reviewing stand. That way, the American Legion is not announced as Girl Scout Troop 104.

73,

-- Tom Kirby KJ4FUU

President

Meeting called to order by President, Tom, KJ4FUU

D-STAR NOTICE

Icom America has notified the user community of IC-7410's that they now have a fix for the ALC overshoot issue that was identified in several of the early production runs, and has a process in place for owners to request the fix. This issue also pertains to the IC-9100's, but Icom America has not yet notified the user community of a process for scheduling fixes for owners of the IC-9100 series

of radios. For those who own IC-7410's or IC-9100's, you may be wondering what is an ALC overshoot issue? Basically, as outlined by W8JI on his website, www.w8ji.com/alc_exciter_power_overshoot.htm, an "ALC overshoot, or power overshoot, is caused by the basic flawed design of ALC circuits and RF power control systems...The problem is rooted in group delay times as the signal makes its way through the radio to the output port... The major problem with overshoot is voltage breakdown damage to amplifiers and components following the amplifier. This occurs in all amplifiers, from solid state to vacuum tube triodes. A secondary problem is bandwidth, with this problem mainly occurring or being most disruptive with tetrode amplifiers."

To summarize, ALC overshoot can cause component damage or splatter or clicks when the user transmits **when an amplifier is used**. The issue with regards to ALC overshoot on IC-7410's and IC-9100's was identified by Adam Farson, AB4OJ/VA7OJ, in his in-depth analysis of the IC-7410 and IC-9100 (see: <http://www.ab4oj.com/icom/ic7410/7410notes.pdf> and <http://www.ab4oj.com/icom/ic9100/9100notes.pdf>). Adam is a retired telecom engineer and does a fantastic job in technically reviewing new rigs when they are first released and sometimes gets a manufacturer's preview of upcoming new rigs to examine. His website is well worth a visit.)

In general, based on K4IFG's query to Icom, the process will be: "Icom US plans on contacting folks from their generated list and customers will be notified to ship to WA for necessary repairs. Repairs are to be first-in first-out basis and only several a week will be processed. Units are NOT to be shipped until notified by Icom US. Packaging should be a minimum of double boxing. If you have a problem, contact Icom US ASAP and get on their list - the sooner on the list - the sooner the repairs. Include serial number and date of purchase. It's nice dealing with a vendor that stands behind its products."

As mentioned earlier, Icom America does not currently have a schedule for fixing IC-9100's, but there are supposedly plans in the works for owners of those units to have the fix applied to them as well. You can follow additional discussion related to the IC-7410 or IC-9100 on the Yahoo groups, icom7410@yahoogroups.com or ic9100@yahoogroups.com.

73,
Marshall
KI4MWP

NOVEMBER MEETING MINUTES and ELECTION RESULTS

Meeting called to order by President, Tom, KJ4FUU

Seventeen Members and 4 guests were in attendance. Tim O'Neill, KT4MV presented fox hunting via loops, time difference and Doppler techniques. Also included were direction finding techniques used in the past by various groups including the military and FAA. Tim was made a honorary lifetime member by the club recognizing his selfless effort in maintaining our multiple club repeaters.

Treasurer's report:

- Basic Checking: \$984.73

- Communications Trailer: \$855.32
- Education Fund: \$2,312.32
- Regular Shares: \$5,225.08
- Total Deposit Accounts: \$9,377.45

Secretary's Report: No change.

Committees:

Education – KA4GFY. December 10th is the exam.

Repeaters – Tim, KT4MV. Two m OK, 900Mhz OK 1200 Mhz OK 220 OK working to get 6m by end of year. 440Mhz audio is dropping out will work this in future. Might use two old Motorola's to get 440 working quickly. Also need to make a new cable for 440Mhz repeater.

Trailer – Rich, KA4GFY & Rick, N4ASX & Doug AK4QY. No changes briefed.

DSTAR – KI4MWP. Experiencing a linking problem with disconnects. New software in last month may need to be changed.

Webmaster – Roy, K4AXQ Not present.

ARES – Rick, N4ASX. Not present.

Christmas Party – Ian, N8IK. Please get info to Ian on who will attend and desired menu selections by 9 December 2013. He needs the count for the restaurant.

New officers were nominated and elected for 2014. They are as follows:

Tom Kirby, KJ4FUU – President

Larry Walker, KK4CBL – Vice President

Eric Misavage, KI4BXU – Secretary

Steven Wagner, W8RJH – Treasurer

Net Controls for the next period:

- Nov 14 – KA4GFY
- Nov 21 – W9TCE
- Nov 28 – No net
- Dec 5 - N8IK
- Dec 12 - KJ4FUU

Jeremy, KF7IJZ, has decided to remain with the club.

Meeting was adjourned by the President, Tom, KJ4FUU.

Hamfests –

Its time to look for hamfests on next year's calendar. The first hamfest in the area is the Maryland Mobileers hamfest on January 26, held at the Odenton Volunteer Fire Department. The Richmond Frostfest rolls around a week later on February 1 at the Richmond Raceway Complex and the Vienna Winterfest at the Annandale Campus of Northern VA Community College on February 23. Its not that far off.

Training -

Our current class started on October 1 and now wrapping up with the exam on December 10. If you are looking to upgrade to General or Exwith 15 students now enrolled. The exam date is December 10. If you are looking to upgrade, be sure to let me know so I can make sure to have enough General and Extra tests on hand.

Our next class will be starting on March 4. I am already fielding questions for the next class.

Contests

December 6 through 8 – ARRL 160 Meter Contest (CW). Exchange is the RST and ARRL Section. With a little ingenuity, you CAN get on 160.

December 14 and 15 – ARRL 10 Meter Contest (CW and SSB). Exchange is RS(T) and state or a serial number for DX stations. If the band is open, this is a great contest. You will have more trouble working closer stations than DX stations.

December 22 – ARRL Rookie Roundup (CW). This is a contest where the new ops get to shine. The exchange is both calls, name, check and section. Like the Sweepstakes, the check is the last two digits of the year you were first licensed.

December 28 – RAC Winter Contest (CW and SSB). Exchange is the RST and serial number for non-Canadian stations.

We also have a couple of non-contest operating events that are worth noting.

December 6 – NWS Skywarn Recognition Day. The object is to work as many of the participating National Weather Service stations as possible. The exchange is the weather conditions at your location. Check the NWS Skywarn page for the times and frequencies the stations will be on.

January 1 – ARRL Straight Key Night. Not a contest, but friendly QSOs between stations is the norm. Instead of sending an “RST”, use “SKN” to clue others into Straight Key Night. Some operators really can send code at 35+ words per minute with a straight key and it’s a pleasure to listen to.

73,
Rich, KA4GFY

Radio Spectrum, Use it or Lose it!

Unless you are a recent licensee or have been under a rock for several years, you know our spectrum is very valuable real estate in the world of communications, particularly the spectrum above 420 MHz. The cell phone companies would love to latch on to some of our spectrum in the Gigahertz region and Congress recently made a grab for spectrum we share with DOD in the 420 to 440 MHz to farm out to commercial users. They no no clue there was any amateur activity there. This is not uncommon. Thankfully, DOD stepped in and reminded Congress those frequencies are being used by DOD, so buzz off.

Some time ago, there was even an idea to put low earth orbiting satellites on 2 meters for internet access. When ARRL raised many red flags about the incompatibility of hams ragchewing and people surfing the internet at the same time, the company’s “engineers” stated we could both share the spectrum with no problem. NOT. ARRL proved them wrong. The engineers knew about computers, but nothing about radio.

Let’s not forget the fiasco with the lower 2 MHz of our 1.25 meter band. At one time, hams had access to 220 to 225 MHz. The lower two MHz was primarily used for weak signal work, as well as linking and control frequencies for repeaters. One radio company that is no longer in business had an idea for a new operating mode on VHF, but had no place put this new mode. So, in looking for a place to put this new mode, they looked at a repeater directory and decided the lower two MHz of 1.25 meters was a good place. After all, hams were only using the top 3 MHz of the band, for repeaters. Never mind the fact we don’t publish linking and control frequencies, for good reason. So, this company convinced the FCC that hams weren’t using that portion of 1.25 meters, despite an outcry from ARRL and concerned individual amateurs. When it was all said and done, we lost the bottom 2 MHz of a really great band and caused what we call in the accounting world “negative goodwill” with the FCC because we called out the underhanded way in which this was done.

The bottom line is we need to make sure our ham radio frequencies are being used. If you participate in contests, be sure to send in your score. This data is used by the sponsors as proof

our frequencies really are being used. If your entire shack is a handheld and you only operate VHF and/or UHF, be sure to announce yourself on the repeater. Somebody is out there. Maybe not all the time, but keep at it. There are great contests for VHF and UHF operators. If you are into DSTAR, there is a QSO party for DSTAR.

If we make use of our very valuable radio spectrum, we can keep the spectrum we have. Our VHF and UHF spectrum is a prime target for expansion of commercial users. Congress is looking to close the budget deficit by selling off radio spectrum. Let everyone know we ARE using it. Get on the air!

73,
Rich, KA4GFY

For those who are not able to make the party, We wish you all a Merry Christmas, or happy holidays and a wonderful New Year.

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 PM. A good burger and soft drink runs about \$9.00.