

ARC-SHORTS

February 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 CLUB MEETING

Our next meeting is February 14th (St. Valentine's Day) at the Alexandria, Police Dispatch Center 3600 Duke St. Dinner for those interested is at Atlantis Restaurant in the Bradlee Shopping Center off Rt.7 just east of I-395. Talk in is on the 147.315 repeater and we generally get together around 5:30 or so. This meeting's program will be the VIRGINIA QSO PARTY.

January Meeting Minutes

ARC meeting minutes January 10, 2020

The following after action reports were given by the secretary, his report from our Christmas party, the food was good, and everyone had a good time.

The treasure report was given he provided the balance of each account.

The president floated the idea of a repeater type net, there were some discussion, but more research will be done. (Editor's note – Rick N4ASX, will act as NCS for a Tuesday evening 6 meter net on the 53.13 repeater at 7PM. Same format as the 2 meter net.)

Our president would like for us to continue researching ARC history so that we may present some of the more noteworthy items for feature members. This will be an ongoing process.

Our president would like to explore the possibilities of a Rig Raffle providing an Icom 7300 as the prize, there were some discussion about the rules a regulations. It was decided that we should do more research on how best to do a raffle. We will need to do more research on the rules on how organizations do fund rising using raffles. A flyer was presented that would be used as advertising and ticket sales would be \$20.00 each.

The treasure presented a budget, there were some amendments made to the web hosting figures and the budgets was accepted.

NEW NET – 6 METERS

We have a repeaters that are not being used and folks looking to exercise their equipment, SO, we will try to establish a NEW 6 METER FM net

When: Tuesday evening at 7PM local

Frequency: 53.13 repeater (-1Mhz offset 107.2 PL)

Same format as our 2 Meter net.

PRESIDENT'S INPUTS

AT the January meeting, I articulated my vision with several proposed goals for 2020 as follows.

- **Pursuing and securing club legacy artifacts for an ARC legacy collection**
 - Photos, recognitions (certificates/awards/mentions)
 - Reach out to past club members for help
 - Assemble a Book of Club Achievements/Memorabilia
- **Pursuing stronger ties with the City**
 - Chief Smedley from the EOC is now Fire Chief – he was a supporter of ARC
 - Opportunities for stronger relationships for emergency/disaster support to the city
 - Could increase the potential for AREDN development across the City
- **Assist Alexandria CERT with strengthening their radio communications capabilities**
 - Early December ARC ham radio presentation to CERT was quite well received
 - ARC is in a good position to do this and it could help the city in case of disasters/emergencies

Additional objectives for 2020 he would like to see pursued are as follows:

- Build a Group ARC Sweatshirt or jacket purchase order - we don't have any cool/cold weather tops with club insignia
- Develop a club mechanism for club donations
 - Many members of have very nice (and really expensive) ham gear, but we grew up in the 1940s, 50s and 60s – there may be only a few years of active ham radio remaining
 - What happens to that expensive equipment?
 - Would the club be interested in serious donations?
- Establish General Class teaching sessions - add 5 weeks (a month plus) to the current 10 week tech sessions to exclusively cover general class material for those interested
 - We try to cover some general class material during the tech sessions, but the success rate for general exams have suffered because the material deserves more empahsis
- HF Portable Ops Practice Sessions – there was a lot of for portable ops at the park leading up to Field Day.
- “Net Captains” or “Adopt a Net”- Individual members volunteer to adopt one of our repeaters and randomly announces a net on repeater not commonly used.
 - Those who have radios on those frequencies can join in to make sure their radios operate

The club improves use of the spectrums we have

He also proposed some examples of presentations ARC would interest club members and could help pursue the aims of the vision he has proposed.

- Alexandria Fire Chief Presentation

- Where the city is going in first responder communications
- How can ARC help?
- CERT Coordinator Presentation
 - Help club members understand the role and capabilities of CERT
 - Establish an opportunity for more radio training for CERT members
 - Establish opportunities for CERT members to become ham radio operators
 - Develop an understanding of how ARES and CERT fit in during emergencies
- EOC Chief (Another visit to EOC?)
 - We need an update on EOC capabilities development with ARES
 - Enable ARC to better understand the likelihood of EOC calling up ARC ARES
- AMSAT
 - What's new at AMSAT
 - How best to get started with ham radio SATCOM
- Ham Radio Outlet - what are the business trends in ham radio gear?
- SDR Trends in ham radio

He also proposed a club raffle with a prize to be awarded at Field Day 2010. The raffle could have the following features:

- Rig purchase ~\$1000.00 (Example rig the IC7300)
- Proceeds to the club for expenses (DSL, club refreshments, maintenance of assets, etc.)
- Ticket sold through out DC Metro Area
- Ticket booth at Winterfest
- Here is the Math:
- 200 tickets sold @ \$20.00 = \$4,000
- 100 tickets sold @ \$20.00 = \$2,000
- 50 ticket sold @ \$20.00 = \$1,000
- Eight (8) tickets already pledged
- Winner announced at Field Day

Following the January meeting Don and I met to begin follow up and developing details on some of the proposals resulting in creation of an AREDN committee, a Club history project committee and possible a membership committee. The following is a list of scheduled activities and events for 2020 as of Feb 3:
Scheduled Presentations and Activities for 2020

- January 10th – Meeting, discussions of plans, programs and activities for 2020
- February 1st – FROSTFEST, Richmond, VA
- February 14th – Meeting, VA QSO Party Presentation
- February 17th – George Washington Day Parade participation (9AM – 2:30PM)
- March 2nd – License Classes begin (Ends May 5th with a VE Session)
- March 7th – St Patrick's Day Parade
- March 13th – Meeting, Member GO-KIT Exhibits & Discussions or ARDEN
- March 21-22nd – VA QSO Party Weekend
- March 29th WINTERFEST, Annandale, VA (We have tables!)
- April 8th – Field Day planning committee kickoff meeting (John Marshall Library)
- April 10th – Meeting, Alexandria CERT
- May 14th – Meeting, WINLINK presentation
- May 15-17th – HAMVENTION, Dayton, OH

- June 12th – Meeting, Field Day final briefing
- June 27-28 – FIELD DAY 2020
- July 10th – Meeting,
- August 14th – Meeting, Marine Corps Marathon Briefing
- September 11th – Meeting,
- October 14st -- Meeting,
- October 25th – MARINE CORPS MARATHON
- November 13th – Meeting, Club ELECTIONS
- December 11th – Meeting, Christmas party

2020

Programs in the works: AMSAT, AMRAD, HRO, EOC visit, SDRs

Currently, I do not have a lot of programs for next year. YOU DON'T NEED TO PRESENT; just suggest a topic you would like to hear about. HELP!!!! If you have an idea for a program, please let Rick know and he will try to find someone to provide the program. If you know someone you would like to have present a program, let me know

Rick, N4ASX

ALEXANDRIA RADIO CLUB WEEKLY NET

The club has a weekly net on the 147.315 (PL 107.2) repeater at 8 PM local time for about one hour. Out of a club of 80 members, the turn out for our weekly net is about 10 to 12. Maybe it because we have not publicized the net.

Jack, KC7VOU is our net control manager. He keeps track of who checks in and who volunteers for net control.

The purpose of our net is to practice net operations, share information of interest to the club, ARES and amateur radio in general.

Those who have ID-51As on loan for ARES use need to check in with these radios once a month and participate in one ARES or public service activity each year.

The net starts with check ins: first short time (those who can only stay for a short time), portables and mobile stations, then regular stations. Once we have check ins, The Net Control Station (NCS) will go through the list of check ins and get the first round of comments. During the net, the NCS will ask for late check ins and add them to the list. At the bottom of the list, the NCS will go back to the top of the list for additional comments. This gives all a chance to react to the other comments. At the end of the second round, the NCS will ask for any additional comments, questions or late check ins.

If there is time or interest the NCS may suggest that a second net be held on one of our other repeaters. We can go D-STAR, DMR, 6 Meters, 1.25 Meters, 70cm, 900Hz or 1.2Ghz.

Jack is now keeping a record of check ins and we will have some recognition for those who check in the most, and for our most active NCS volunteers.

Thanks Jack,

ARES

At FrostFest I attended both the ARRL and ARES forums. The ARRL forum brought up some changes being proposed by the ARRL board. One was lower cost life memberships to those over 70 with 25 years of annual membership, but the cost has not yet been set.

The ARES forum was a little more interesting. Our Section (VA.) Emergency Manager (SEC) pointed out that only 4 of the 95 or so EC submitted annual reports. I did not know I was supposed to submit an annual report. I brought up the need for better communications within the state between the ARES leadership and the ECs.

The BIG news was that Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM) has approached ARES and has asked ARES to be part of their plans, further ARES will realign its Districts to coincided with the State VDEM districts, Alexandria will become part of District 7. For operational purposes, the city will, in time of an emergency, go through the VDEM district official to get state or district support and resources.

New requirements for ARES volunteers. First, to find out what's going on in the state FACEBOOK is the place to get info (so I'm told), All ARES volunteers will be expected to sign up with ARRL ARES CONNECT VA. I understand that I will be able to keep records and post nets and events for our group on this site. Please sign up <https://arrl.volunteerhub.com/> Make sure you're on the Virginia site. Another requirement is the TRAINING TASK BOOK. I sent out the PDF earlier. Note that you have a year to complete the requirement. There are THREE levels. Level 1 is easy. SKYWARN requirement is every two years and can be done now ONLINE. FEMA IS100 is also done online. As for the other requirements, let me know when you complete the items on the list, and I will be happy to sign off as EC.

OUR next big training event is The George Washington's Birthday Parade on February 17th. We need at least 10 volunteers to support.

DATE: February 17th

TIME: Meet at the Fire Training Center (behind the Nanny J. Lee Community Center) at 9AM. 9:30 depart for Parade course. 10AM Roads Closed around the parade route, 11AM Parade forms up by division, we work with the division parade marshals to know who shows up, correct order of march info and provide safety support. 1PM Parade Start. If possible two APRS operators with APRS HTs are needed to walk at the start and end of the parade. A third APRS operator should be at the reviewing stand to track and report progress. The Parade normally ends about 2:30PM and we then go for lunch and discuss the event.

Frequency Plan: Talk in on 147.315 repeater. We will also use the 147.315 repeater as primary communications for parade marshal shadows. Shadows should wait with changes until their unit is complete and ready to step off and bring the changes to the TRAILER at the start of the race. The operator in the trailer will change to excel file of the order of march and send it the reviewing stand operator via AREDN to be printed out and provided to the reviewing stand.

Please send Rick, N4ASX an E-mail if you can support (N4ASX@cox.net)

73 Rick

IS PACKET RADIO DEAD?

Back in the early 1980s, Terry Fox and others developed an adaptation of the X-25 protocol (used in either net or the internet) to operate over the air. The system they developed was a MODEM (Modulator – DEModulator) that could be hooked to the audio inputs and outputs of a conventional FM radio for use at 1200 baud or to an HF radio at 300 baud. The system required its own processor to take inputs from a terminal and add error correction, a header that included the ID of the sending and receiving station. The new protocol was labeled AX-25 for Amateur X-25. Data was placed in packets with the to and from info, and error correction. Each “packet of data could carry a given number of bits, so your traffic was broken up into pieces. The MODEM also included the PTT function and reassembled the received packets for the terminal. It also did the error correction. AX-25 expected that one station would first CONNECT to another station. Once you connected to the other station you copied that station. When you were done you DISCONNECTED.

Before the popularity of the internet, PACKET was popular for clubs and groups to set up MAIN BOXES. You would CONNECT to the mailbox and upload your mail and collect your mail. There were also DX clusters where you could connect to the DX Cluster and see what DX was on the air. When the internet hit, Packet mailboxes and DX Clusters went away.

Packet was slow at 1200 baud, but for keyboard to keyboard on VHF it worked well. But the need to connect to another station made it bad for making new contacts or QSOs.

Where it was handy was for public service. With Bob Brunaga’s help we used PACKET in 1994 to track the race lead. Bob, put a Radio Shack RS-100, radio and TNC on a pack frame and with another operator cut across the course sending observations back to the MCM headquarters (Iwo Memorial). Later PACKET became the way to send patient data from aid stations to the MCM runner data base. This was critical until the advent of the ID-1 D-STAR and served (at 9600 baud) as an alternative to D-Star.

The Alexandria Radio Club has used 1200 baud packet to send ORDER OF MARCH files from the start of parades to the reviewing stand. The start point operator, edits the file (usually Excel) as inputs are provided by the parade marshals via our shadows and then sends the file to the reviewing stand to be printed. We still use it as a back up now that we’ve done the same thing via AREDN.

SO, to answer the question, Is PACKET dead? I don’t think so. First PACKET is the foundation for APRS and that is still growing. In this month’s CQ Magazine is an article on higher speed packet TNCs with the need for digital traffic for public service and ARES. It’s simple, inexpensive and can be used on VHF bands that are more tolerant of line of sight and tree issues. Another point. If you have a mobile radio that has ARPS built in (TM-D700A, TM-D710?, etc.) you have PACKET. And you have it at both 1200 and 9600 baud. Just connect the radio to the terminal or your phone and you can send and receive packet traffic.

73 Rick

N4ASX

Hamfests –

The next hamfest in our area is the Winterfest at the Annandale Campus of Northern Virginia Community College, on March 29, 2020. We always get three tables to sell your excess radio gear taking up precious space in your shack. Its sponsored by the Vienna Wireless Society. Talk-in on the NVFMA's 146.910 MHz repeater. Here is the link; <https://viennawireless.net/wp/events/winterfest/>

Early May brings the Great Hagerstown Hamfest on Saturday, May 2, 2020. It's sponsored by the Antietam Radio Association. It will be held a Washington County Ag-Center in Boonsboro, MD. Talk-in will be on the Antietam Radio Association's 147.090 (+ offset, PL 100 Hz) repeater. Here is the link: <https://w3cwc.org/hamfest>

It's not too early to start thinking about the Dayton Hamvention, the Big Kahuna of hamfests. There were over 32,000 people at Hamvention last year. I have 3 rooms available in Fairborn, OH near the US Air Force Museum. We travel out on Wednesday and do a museum or two in the Dayton area on Thursday. If you are interested in going, please let me know by April 1 so I can order tickets. Here is the link: <https://hamvention.org/>

Later in May, on May 24, 2020, it's the memorial Weekend Hamfest, sponsored by the Maryland FM Association. It's held at the Howard County Fairgrounds in West Friendship, MD, right off Route 144 and I-70. Talk-in will be on the MFMA repeaters, 146.760 (-), 224.760 (-) and 444.000 (+). All need a 107.2 Hz PL tone to access them. Here is the link: <http://www.marylandfm.org/Hamfest.htm>

In June, it's the Olde Virginia Hams hamfest in Manassas Park on June 13, 2020. It's held at the Manassas Park Community Center, just off Route 28. Talk-in on the Olde VA Hams 146.970 (PL 100 Hz) repeater. Here is the link: <https://w4ovh.net/welcome-to-manassas-hamfest/>

Training –

Our Fall 2019 class finished up with nearly everybody taking the exam. Those that did passed with flying colors. We even had several people join the exam. We had a 100% success rate. Everybody walked out with a new license or upgrade. When you hear them on the air or see them at club meetings, be sure to welcome them to ham radio.

Our next class is scheduled to start on March 10 and end May 5, 2020. We are already getting inquiries about the next class. If you know somebody who has always wanted to become a ham, send them our way. We already have several people expressing interest in becoming hams.

We have a very successful program. Nearly all our students pass the exam with 90% or better and we do not teach the test, we teach the material.

Contests –

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- February 10 to 14 – ARRL Scholl Club Roundup. Exchange is RST and class (most of us will be “I” for individual).
- February 15 and 16 – ARRL International DX Contest, CW. Exchange is RST and state.
- February 29 and March 1 – South Carolina QSO Party. Exchange is RST and state.
- March 1 – North Carolina QSO Party. Exchange is your state.
- March 7 and 8 – ARRL DX Contest, SSB – Exchange is RST and state.
- March 14 and 15 – Oklahoma QSO Party. Exchange is RST and state.
- March 15 and 16 – Wisconsin QSO Party – Exchange is state.

The VA QSO Party is on March 21 and 22 this year. Be sure to help support the club’s efforts by getting on the air and submitting your logs. We have an added incentive this year, we will be featured on the VA QSO Party certificate that will be sent out to all the participants!

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 QSO Party Groups.io.forum and State QSOParty.com.

Don't forget, be sure to send in your log within 7 days after the contest ends for all ARRL sponsored contests.

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Repeaters –

The club repeaters are all up and running. We will have to resume the follow-on net on one of the other repeaters after the Thursday net on the 2 meter analog repeater.

We are still working the internet connection issue at the hospital.

The DSTAR and DMR repeaters continue to get a lot of use.

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

73, Rich, KA4GFY

Social Events

Monday Night Burgers – There is a group that gets together at 6:15 PM on Mondays at a local burger joint. Mark up on the 147.315 repeater and join them for the fun. Mark up on the repeater about 6PM and join the group. The location does change! IF you have a good spot, you might suggest it to the group.