

ARC-SHORTS

MARCH 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

We are still holding our meetings via ZOOM. Don, KI4D will be sending out the meeting link this week. Same meeting time, SECOND FRIDAY of each month at 7PM LOCAL.

The March 12th ARC monthly meeting will feature Howard (WB2UZE) and Jim (W6JIM) of the Long Island CW Club on 'Learn & Have Fun with Morse Code'. As an indication of the popularity of the Long Island CW club activities, it has over 1400 members, worldwide. It is noteworthy that one of the best things about CW is that even Technician Class operators can operate worldwide CW on HF, with a minimal investment.

Last Meeting

Alexandria Radio Club
Meeting Minutes February 12, 2021

Our guest speaker for February 12, 2021 was Gordon Miller NQ4K, he briefed us on the 2021 Virginia QSO Party, he continues to encourage the submission of automated logs. The two recommended logging programs are N1MM and N3FJP

N1MM Logger is the world's most popular ham radio contest logging program. For CW, phone and digital modes, its combination of contest-optimized features is unmatched. N1MM is free to download.

The regular business reports were given to the members and accepted.

Each of the committees provided an updated status to the members.

Net control operators for the following dates are:

- February 18, 2021 Richard Adamy
- February 25, 2021 Ian Keith
- March 4, 2021 Rick Bunn

- March 11, 2021 Harry Jones

ALL members are invited to take a turn as Net Control.

We now have a D-Star Net on Wednesday evenings. We link our D-Star 2 meter repeater with REF062A so that those outside the area can participate.

HEARD ON THE NETS

KO4IU Jimmy, just upgraded to Amateur EXTRA CLASS!

WD4ADF Bryan, has been acting as Net Control for a Net (over Echolink) in Alberta Canada.

K0RVW Ken, New member just getting into amateur radio. Welcome to Amateur Radio and the club. Ken also upgraded to General recently.

W4ODA Ken – New License, Welcome Ken!

Our second D-Star net include K4QFS Lane who is now in Guam and working HF on an R-9 vertical and about 500 watts, Look for him! Lane will be returning to the area in November.

Great turnout on the D-Star net! Ian is our Net Control and did a fantastic job. NCS is like herding cats.

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Virginia continues to be under a state of emergency based on COVID-19, but as of February 24th has reduced restrictions with amended Executive Order 72. The amended order allows the maximum number of individuals permitted in a social gathering to increase from 10 to 25 people for outdoor settings, while remaining at 10 persons for indoor settings. The new guidelines will be effective for at least one month and mitigation measures may be eased further if key health metrics continue to improve according to the order. 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.

Thanks to Club members who have already paid dues for 2021! This note is mainly a reminder for those who renew club membership each year in January. For those who renew in months other than January and want to be pro-active or want to avoid the rush, you may also pay your renewal dues by January which will result in 12 months of membership being added to the date of your last dues payment. Membership dues is \$25.00 per year, please see our website for more details. The easiest and quickest way to pay dues is via PayPal on the W4HFH website at <https://w4hfh.org>, or you may mail a check or money order to Alexandria Radio Club, Inc., P.O. Box 30721 , Alexandria, VA 22310.

This month, we are again delighted and fortunate to have new club members. We are welcoming new club members Ken van Wyk (K0RVW), Derek Kelly, (WB4DAM) and Michael Osborne (KM4PR), who recently joined ARC. (Note Derek Kelly was a member of the club when I joined in 1978, RRB)

The ARC February 12th meeting featured a presentation by on Virginia QSO Party (2021) by Gordon Miller (NQ4K). For many years, Gordon has traveled to Alexandria to brief the Alexandria Radio Club on the details of the upcoming annual Virginia QSO party. This year, the Virginia QSO Party will be held during the weekend of March 20-21st.

The ARC Leadership Group met on February 19th. The club leadership group consists of elected officers, committee chairs, and presidents emeritus. Several items were discussed including strategies for membership building and retention, maximizing the value of new at-large-Board Directors to ARC, fundraising ideas, adding tech roundtables of potential interest to new and old club members, updates to the ARC Club Officer's Guide, and maximizing repeater uses. The group discussed options for Field Day 2021 with plans for making a decision by May 1st on whether the club will have a virtual or in-person event in 2021 based on the COVID-19 outlook.

Winlink is an email system that provides worldwide email using radio pathways where the internet is not present. The system is built, operated, and administered entirely by licensed "Ham" volunteers. Currently, five members of the Alexandria Radio Club regularly maintain their proficiency using Winlink by checking into [Winlink Wednesday](#) every Wednesday. Credits to Rick Bunn (N4ASX), Rich Adamy (KA4GFY), Richard Morani (KW4UJ), Ryan Stinebiser (KO4EBY) and Don Lewis (KI4D) for maintaining their Winlink proficiency, a valuable capability in case emergencies. Special congratulations go out to Rick Bunn for logging over 100 Winlink sessions and earning the Winlink Century Award Certificate.

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.

ARC recorded Zoom meetings with featured presentations are located at <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1MG9VUqKOWeoWEWt0oBwyhbzh4qILqbl?usp=sharing>.

Scheduled Activities and Presentations for 2021 updated as of February 1, 2020

- January 8th – ZOOM MEETING, Pentagon Radio Club MARS Operations by Gary Sessums (KC5QCN)
- 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 – St Patrick’s Day Parade
- March 12th – ZOOM MEETING, Long Island CW Club, Howard Bernstein (WB2UZE)
- 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 – MEETING
- September 10th – MEETING, MCM Briefng, Howard Cunningham, (WD5DBC)
- October 8th – MEETING, History of ARC, Don Lewis (KI4D)
- 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 other discussing their experiences with the topics with Q&A.)

- Mobile installations
- Building a Go-kit for ARES
- Ham Activities for the Technician Class
- Handy talkies options, what kind, how much? Pros and Cons
- Portable ops (rigs, batteries, antennas, etc.)
- Starter Base Station Options
- Stealthy Antennas for city dwellers
- QSL Cards
- Getting Started with ECHOLINK
- Getting Started with Amateur Radio Satellite Communications
- Parks on the Air for Beginners
- Working with Repeaters
- Using NVIS
- Working with Digital modes
- Getting started with WINLINK
- Logging with N3FJP
- HF and Scanner monitoring for beginners
- A Club Member Shack Tour
- How to Build Raspberry Pi Hot Spots

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

73 Don, KI4D

ARES

I will try to schedule for later in the year to provide more information on ARES operations in Alexandria. Below are a few points to think about.

1 – You do not need any special training to volunteer for ARES. However, after volunteering you will need to complete FEMA IS-100 via the internet and it takes about 30 minutes. There is a training plan if you want to learn more about emergency communications and management.

2 – If you do volunteer it is a commitment. We don't have to many real emergencies, but when we do, we need people we can count on.

3 – Volunteering across jurisdictions – Many volunteers when using the ARES Connect website volunteered for several organizations with the idea that they could keep tabs on all that was going on. The problem then is that several organizations believe that those volunteers are available to them in an emergency. ONLY volunteer for ONE ARES group!

4 – The majority of operations use 2 meter FM. One exception is here in Alexandria, the only way to support the hospital is with D-STAR. This is not an issue for some of our volunteers as the city has purchased 10 ID-51A HTs and 7 of them are not issued. Volunteers can borrow them and use them for a year at a time. Each year they need to be checked by the EC.

5 – ARES members are the first operators called for public service events like the G.W. Birthday Parade, Marine Corps Marathon, The St. Patrick's Day Parade, and other activities. Working public service activities is great training in all aspects of what we would do for an emergency.

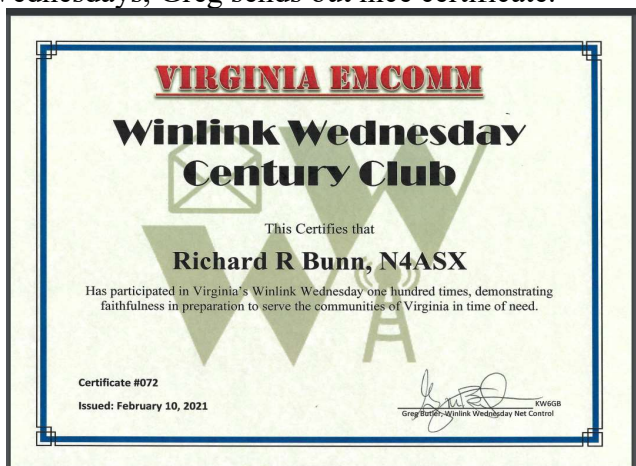
6 – The public has a diverse view of amateur radio. Some understand that it's a hobby with the ability to perform great services in an emergency, but very rarely do we see amateur radio on the news. The other side is our antenna are not welcome in neighborhoods, we are accused of causing interference to commercial devices. Recently, amateur radio was tied in with the protests on January 6th at the Capital. Our image and support depend on the public opinion of our hobby. One might say that ARES and Public Service communications is one way to improve that image.

WinLink Wednesday

More and more of us are learning to use WINLINK 2000. Basically, it allows you to use amateur radio to send e-mail worldwide. Yes, this is via the internet, but the system can use radio relays in the event of an internet failure or your inability to use the internet.

Winlink allows us to communicate without the internet worldwide. While our primary communications have been via voice communications, e-mail allows for more clarity and no loss of meaning between the sender and the receiver of traffic.

It is one thing to have this tool but if you don't practice with it you will not be able to use it effectively. To this end Greg Butler KW6GB, started WINLINK WEDNESDAY. ON the third Wednesday, you send a message using a form template. This helps when you need to send a form via WINLINK. Each Wednesday participants send him a simple message via WINLINK, and he keep a record of who, where and whether you are using VHF or HF. Most of us use 1200 baud packet and send our messages to Greg via a local WINLINK VHF gateway. The gateway forwards the traffic to Greg via a network of servers. Once you have participated for 100 Wednesdays, Greg sends out nice certificate.



We have about 6 club members who have been participating. All you need is a packet TNC and a 2 meter FM radio to get started. You can also operate on HF using a few modes. First step is to download WINLINK RMS from the WINLINK website.

ELMER'S INPUTS

The Ft. Myers Club in Ft. Myers Florida has created a NEW HAM Quick Reference Guide. Rich KA4GFY, found a similar publications from a Texas club. I think this would be a good thing for us to put together to provide to those who just past their Technician Level license test.

This is for NEW amateurs. A while back I recommended that all amateurs have a copy of three ARRL publications, one of which, was the Operations Manual. There are lots of little things that can help a new operator and we will try to put them together in a small booklet. As I have been in the hobby for 50 years, I would like to know what you think would be helpful to the new amateurs.

We will cover local clubs, repeaters, common Q-Signals, tips on learning and use Morse code (CW), some aspects of net procedure, hamfests, public service and ARES activities, club activities etc. Please feel free to send Rick, N4ASX@COX.NET your ideas on what should be included.

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. 2020 was 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.

With the new month, some of the restrictions have been lifted, but not for events like hamfests which can draw large crowds.

At the present time, Berryville is still on the calendar. But that could change depending on whether hamfest-sized groups are permitted.

Whether it's Berryville 2021 or Richmond 2022, once we are able safely to attend hamfests, let's be sure to all go to the first area hamfest.

As many expected, Hamvention 2021 has been cancelled. Here's hoping 2021 will improve as the year goes on. Past history and the experts tell us pandemics last two years.

TRAINING –

Since we will be using Zoom to teach classes, we are looking at holding both Technician and General at the same time starting March 23 and ending May 25, 2021. There have been a few people who have signed up for the Technician class. If you know of somebody who has always wanted to become a ham radio operator, they can sign up on the club website <https://w4hfh.org> and ask me questions at ka4gfy@arrl.net. I do have a couple of people who have asked about General classes. If you are a Technician looking to upgrade to General, please sign up on the club's website.

The big logistic question will be scheduling on-line exams for everybody. My experience with on-line exams has been if the test taker is prepared, they can complete the Technician and General exam in about 30 minutes each and 45 minutes for the Extra. So, the last week will be exam week. We do have the option of a space to use that meets the new gathering limitation and I have an idea for a location to do a drive-in exam.

We are still working on getting our VE team up to speed so we can do remote exams. Looking at www.Hamstudy.org, there appears to be a lot of interest in becoming licensed by the number of exam sessions that are full. It appears that VE teams are giving all the exams they can handle.

If you are looking to take an exam, ARRL has a link for finding online exams:
<http://www.arrl.org/findonlineexam>

CONTESTS –

- March 6 and 7- ARRL International DX Contest-SSB. Exchange is RST and state.
- March 13 and 14 – Oklahoma QSO Party. Exchange is RST and state.
- March 13 and 14 – Idaho QSO Party. Exchange is state.
- March 14 and 15 – Wisconsin QSO Party. Exchange is state.
- March 20 and 21 – Virginia QSO Party. Exchange for VA stations is a serial number and county/city. Outside VA is serial number and state.
- March 27 and 28 – CQ Worldwide WPX Contest, SSB – Exchange is RS & serial number
- April 3 and 4 – Mississippi QSO Party – Exchange is RST and state
- April 3 and 4 – Louisiana QSO Party - Exchange is RST and state.
- April 3 and 4 – North American SSB Sprint – Exchange is other station's call, your call., serial number, your name and your state.
- April 3 and 4 – Florida State Parks on the Air – Exchange is state.
- April 10 and 11 – Nebraska QSO Party – Exchange is state.
- April 10 and 11 – New Mexico QSO Party – Exchange is nme and state.
- April 10 and 11 – Georgia QSO Party – Exchange is RST and state.
- April 10 and 11 – North Dakota QSO Party – Exchange is RST and state.
- April 17 and 18 – Michigan QSO Party – Exchange is serial number and state.
- April 17 and 18 – Texas State Parks on the Air – Exchange is RST and state.
- April 17 and 18 – Ontario QSO Party – Exchange is RST and state.
- April 18 – ARRL Rookie Roundup SSB - Exchange is name, 2 digit year 1st licensed and state.
- April 24 and 25 – Florida QSO Party – Exchange is RST and state.

March 20 and 21 is the Virginia QSO Party. Even if you do not have an HF station, you can still participate. There is plenty of activity on 146.580 MHz, 223.500 MHz and 446.000 MHz. You don't need a big station. A modest VHF/UHF radio with a decent antenna will do well. Be sure to send in your log and indicate you belong to the Alexandria Radio Club. We have done well

the last few years. Rules are on the Sterling Park Amateur Radio Club website at:
<https://www.qsl.net/sterling/uf1.htm>

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 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 and 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 23cm 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 return it to reflector you found it on.

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.

Ian, N8IK, has started a Wednesday night DSTAR net on the 145.380 MHz repeater at 8 PM, same time as the Thursday net on the analog repeater. We will most likely be linking the repeater to one of the reflectors so members and former members outside the local area can join in.

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

73, Rich, KA4GFY