

# ARC-SHORTS

February 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**

Due to the Corona Virus, our next meeting will be on ZOOM. Don, KI4D, will send out the invitations. This month we will host Gordon Miller, NQ4K, to provide us with a run down on the VIRGINIA QSO party.

See <http://www.vaqsoparty.com/> and [https://www.qsl.net/sterling/VA\\_QSO\\_Party/2021\\_VQP/2021\\_VQP\\_Main.html](https://www.qsl.net/sterling/VA_QSO_Party/2021_VQP/2021_VQP_Main.html) for more details. The Sterling Park Amateur Radio Club (SPARC) sponsors the VA. QSO Party and has made it one of the largest in participation of all state QSO parties. If you look at the two URLs you can see all kinds of graphs and statistics as well as some hints on how to get a high score. There are certificates given to all who submit logs and 27 awards given out. Gordon has presented his program in the past and it is always a good round up of how the last VAQP went and who sent in logs.

VAQP is the type of contest that you can go full contester, or you enjoy the variety of stations on the air. The goal is to work all the counties and cities in Virginia. All bands are in play. May go mobile or portable and many only use the bands above 50MHz. Something for everyone. Many out of state stations participate as well.

Good meeting to attend. Gordon may want to do a screen capture of our membership so be prepared.

73 Rick  
N4ASX

## **Last Meeting**

ARC Meeting Minutes  
January 8, 2021

Our Guest speaker for January 8, 2021 ARC meeting was Gary Sessums (KC5QCN), his presentation was on Military Auxiliary Radio Systems (MARS). The MARS systems services as backup support systems when there is a communication outage of the main operating systems.

We were briefed on the status of each committee report.

Our president presented proposed changes to our By Laws, currently term limits for the president, vice president, secretary and treasurer are two years. Our treasurer has already served two years. Due to Covid-19 we have not been able to meet as usual, so we voted to update the by-laws to allow for an additional year of service. Normally, we would have voted on a new treasurer and changed all the necessary documents. By updating the by-laws we are continuing with the treasurer for another year.

The proposed Bylaws Revision were voted on and accepted.

## **Presidents Corner**

On the COVID-19 front, Virginia continues to be under a state of emergency based on COVID-19 and has extended restrictions based on

Executive Order 72 until the end of February 2021. Executive Order 72 specified that all individuals in Virginia should remain at their place of residence between the hours of 12:00 a.m. and 5:00 a.m. Individuals may leave their residences for essential purposes as outlined in 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.

The club extends gratitude to all who participated in the successful auctions sales of ham gear previously owned by our silent key members, Jack Hranicky (K5OTZ) and Roy Wright (K4AXQ). Proceeds from the actions have already been delivered to their families who have expressed enormous thanks to ARC.

This month, we are again delighted and fortunate to have new club members. We are welcoming new club members Nicholas Miller (KC4YNC) and Jimmy Ortiz (KO4IU), who recently joined ARC.

The ARC January 8<sup>th</sup> meeting featured a presentation by Gary Sessums (KC5QCN) on the Pentagon Radio Club MARS (Military Auxiliary Radio System) operations. Well known in DC/Metro amateur radio circles, Gary works at the Pentagon providing command and control communications support for the Department of Defense and is a member of Air Force MARS and the Department of Homeland Security SHARES HF radio program. Gary Sessums has been a licensed amateur radio operator for over 25 years, has served as a RACES Radio Officer and a ARES Emergency Coordinator, and led a comms team in deploying emergency communications systems during Hurricane Katrina. He was a member of the ARRL "Force of Fifty" deployed to Puerto Rico in the aftermath of Hurricane Maria. After Gary's presentation, club business primarily focused on membership voting approvals for ARC bylaws modifications and election of Richard Morani (KW4UJ) for a third year as Club Treasurer. The list of club scheduled activities and presentations planned for 2021 was presented and discussed, this list is enclosed below. The Board also welcomes any ideas from club members for programs and activities in 2021. Please send your ideas to [president@w4hfh.org](mailto:president@w4hfh.org).

The ARC Leadership Group met on January 15<sup>th</sup>. The club leadership group consists of elected officers, committee chairs, and president's 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.

Many thanks to those club volunteers that supported the Presidential Inauguration by staffing the City of Alexandria Emergency Operation Center (EOC) and the Alexandria INOVA Hospital EOC during the event. Kudos to Rick Bunn (N4ASX, ARES Coordinator), Ian Keith (N8IK), William Wilson (KM4KLLK), Warren Wylupski (KA2BWU), Scott Granado (KM4RDR), Edward Bradshaw (W4EDF), Harry Jones (N4CWP), Larry Walker (K4LDW), Mark Wheeler (WU6R), Monica Wilson (KC2IAY) and Don Lewis (KI4D) for devoting time and effort to this mission.

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.

ARC recorded Zoom meetings with featured presentations are located at

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1MG9VUqKOWeoWEWt0oBwychbzh4qILqbl?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

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

73 Don, KI4D

## **ARES**

I received an e-mail from ARRL telling me that the ARES CONNECT website is not what ARRL wants and they are terminating their arrangement with the vendor who created the site. I understand that a new site and system will be created and hope that it is easier for all of us to use.

Again, It is important to remember that ARES is generally local in function. This is why we put such emphasis on VHF/UHF operations. Like the Boy Scouts say “Be Prepared”. So, how are WE prepared?

1 – Are you trained?

A – Do you know your equipment and how to get the most out of it? In the past I have seen many hams show up at a public service event and cannot program their radios. In the long distant past, VHF and UHF radios were much simpler and the radios were fairly easy to use. Now we have more memories than one could ever use, Sub-audible tones to access most of the repeaters and we have more modes (FM, D-Star, DMR, Fusion, P-25). Many of us only use our HTs when we are not in the car or operating from home. Our drill on Dec 16<sup>th</sup> showed us that infrastructure can fail us.

B - We had real problems getting traffic out of some of our locations and even out of some of the buildings. This brings us to the second training element. Know your radio science. How does each band work? What is your line of sight? Do you understand how to get performance out of your antenna system?

C – Do you know how and where to operate? This is the ARES part of your training. When your operating day to day you generally speak one to one or in small informal groups. With ARES you need to understand “Formal” nets and net structure. One of the issues is checking into a net and the other which many forget is checking OUT OF A NET. To check in, it usually best to wait to be invited. The Net Control Station (NCS) will ask for check ins and then you might want to wait for the faster keyers to get checked in and then drop your call. One issue you may have not been taught is checking out of the net. It is a courtesy when you’re in the club net to stick around and hear the others on the second time around and then shut down after the NCS has closed the



net. If you decide to leave the net, you can say you are out after your last transmission or say, "RE CHECK", at that point the NCS will let you have the frequency and you can say you need to leave the net. On a club net, that is just a courtesy to let the others know that your gone. In a formal net, it tells the others that you will not be available to receive information at that location. So, the practice is good. You also want to remember that no one on the other end of the radio can see you or get into your head. So, make sure your information is complete and is not going to confuse the people on the other end of the antenna.

Getting training. ARRL has an ARES course, FEMA has several that take less than an hour each IS-100, IS-200, IS-700 and IS-800. When you find time, take one online.

Go-Kits - We use to do a drill every year where the ARES EC (Emergency Coordinator) would call those who were listed as volunteers at 8 or 9PM and ask if you were ready to go and how soon would you be on the way to an assignment. Most would say they needed about 30 minutes. The next question would be: What is the status of your HT's? Do you have charged batteries? And lastly, how long can you stay at a given assignment? The drill was to assess how quickly our ARES group could respond to an emergency. Imagine Alexandria Hospital does have a comms failure? What would you need to operate independently for 6 to 8 hours? What if you're going to operate away from home for two or three days? Can you operate from your vehicle or will you need to carry a high power station (25 to 50 watts) with you? You don't need to assemble kits completely, but it would be good to make a list of your GO-KIT needs and have a plan to assemble the gear for your kit in short order.

Our club president has already thanks all in the ARES group that supported the Alexandria EOC and Alexandria INOVA hospital on January 16<sup>th</sup> and January 20<sup>th</sup>.

The City asked us to support the EOC's operation initially from January 15<sup>th</sup> to January 26<sup>th</sup> 24/7. Later, the need for the 15<sup>th</sup> was removed. Our group is not very large with 14 members and many of those members still work and were not available. Further, COVID is still with us and this also limits our body of volunteers. Chief Whatley notified us that we would be need on the 16<sup>th</sup> and further operations would depend on events.

On Inauguration day – January 20<sup>th</sup>. We had three shifts scheduled and had no idea if we were going to continue either for 24 hours or how long the EOC and Hospital would stay on an emergency footing.

Our first shift at EOC started at 8AM with Rick, N4ASX, and Ian, N8IK. We had already started setting up our radios in the EOC, but needed to program those two radios, set up a laptop for WINLINK and we also had several other projects to complete. Diplexers were added to support the ID-1 (1.2GHz D-Star voice and data as well as FM voice) and 6 meters. Regular check ins were done with the Hospital and with other members at large. This was valuable. In the event there were problems during the inauguration, we could call more support using the Alexandria 147.315 repeater as a logistics and organizational net.

William, KM4LKL and Warren KA2BWU arrived at 11:30 AM and took over radio operations.

They were relieved at 4PM by Scott KM4RDR and Ed, W4EDF. The final shift arrived at 3:30 and left at closing.

The hospital started their operations at 6AM and our first shift started with Don, KI4D and Mark, WU6R. establishing communications via the club's D-Star repeater, which is in the hospital. The use of D-Star not only allowed handheld operation inside the hospital and a solid connection to the EOC but with the use of reflectors we could establish

a much broader coverage should we need to work with neighboring jurisdictions. Rich, KA4GFY was not able to join us at either the hospital or EOC but was on the air most of the day to provide radio checks and inputs as needed.

At 10:30 AM Don and Mark were relieved by Harry, N4CWP and Larry, K4LDW who maintained contact with EOC and supported efforts in the hospital.

At 3:30 PM, Larry and Harry were relieved by Rick, N4ASX, Ian, N8IK and Monica KC2IAY. At 7PM after the EOC had closed, Mr. Allan closed the hospital's operation, and we closed our support.

Many thanks to all who supported this effort. We were very lucky that there were no problems in Alexandria or the DC area, better to be prepared than to be surprised.

We did get to check out our hospital operations and, with the hospital scheduled to move in the next 4 years, gave many of our long time ARES volunteers a look at what we have there and what we will need to move to the new location.

Both Chief Whatley and the EOC and Mr. Allen at INOVA Alexandria hospital were impressed with the professionalism and competence of our operators.

In the future, I hope to expand some of our support to include radio links to CERT volunteers who in this type of operation, could provide invaluable support.

73 Rick  
N4ASX

## **ELMER'S INPUTS**

### **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.

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

As many expected, Hamvention 2021 has been cancelled. Here's hoping 2021 will improve as the year goes on.

### **Training –**

Since we will be using Zoom to teach classes, we are looking at holding both Technician and General at the same time. There have been a few people who have asked about Technician classes.

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 and 45 minutes for the Extra. So, the last week will be exam week.

We are still working on getting our VE team up to speed so we can do remote exams. Looking at [www.Hamstudy.org](http://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 –**

- Feb 6 and 7 – Vermont QSO Party. Exchange is RST and state.
- Feb 6 – Minnesota QSO Party. Exchange is name and state.
- Feb 6 and 7 – British Columbia QSO Party. Exchange is RST and state.
- Feb 6 – North American Sprint, CW. Exchange is other station's call, your call, serial number, your name and state.
- Feb 8 through 12 – ARRL School Club Roundup. Exchange is RST and class. Most of us will be "Individual."
- Feb 20 and 21 – ARRL International DX Contest, CW. Exchange is RST and state.
- Feb 27 and 28 – South Carolina QSO Party. Exchange is RST and state.
- Feb 27 and 28-North American QSO Party, RTTY. Exchange is name and state.
- Feb 28 and March 1 – North Carolina QSO Party. Exchange is state.

- 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.

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](http://3830scores.com) [QSOPartyGroups.io/forum](http://QSOPartyGroups.io/forum) and [StateQSOParty.com](http://StateQSOParty.com).

Be sure to mark your calendar and set aside the weekend of March 20 and 21 for the VA QSO Party. The Alexandria Radio Club sponsors 2 award plaques and has made a good showing the past few years. You don't need a big station to participate. A modest VHF/UHF radio with a decent antenna will do well. There is plenty of activity on 2 meters and 70 cm.

**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.

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