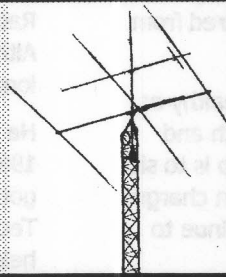


The AARC Beacon



Amateur Radio News For
Charlottesville and
Albemarle County,
Virginia

Volume 2001, No. 4

April 2001

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Meeting Notice

The next regular AARC meeting will be held on April 10 at the NRAO Building on the UVA grounds at 7:30 PM. The program will star Hein, N4FWA, who will give us a talk on **batteries, power supplies and a new connector** that will replace the Radio Shack "standard". See you there!!

The President Speaks

Stan, K2SSB

A sincere vote of thanks goes to Elmer Scott, KF4UCI, for bringing in the borrowed test gear. Quite a few were able to check out their rigs. I regret that I was not one of them, although I did get them checked regularly in Rochester before I moved here in May 1997. Rochester Radio Repeater Association (of which I was a charter member) had one regular meeting per year devoted to such a clinic.

It disturbs me - I might even say it makes me a bit angry - that more of the capacity crowd did not take advantage of Elmer's services. The whole bunch present, forty or fifty to my eyes from the podium, should have been in line. I simply cannot believe that everyone's rig is in top operating condition. This would have been a perfect chance to either verify that it was or to do whatever might be required to put it into top shape.

Upon reflection, "It Seems to Us..." (to borrow the heading of each month's editorial in QST) that this is a telling symptom of the health, or lack of it, of the Club as a whole. How many of you come to meetings...and SIT like bumps on a log??? Do you remember the February meeting? I was trying, **trying** to get you, all of you, to volunteer for spots on the committees that keep the Club operating. Just about nobody raised his or her hand until I got out the sledgehammer. How about the March meeting, when I was similarly trying, **trying**, to get someone to volunteer to bring some goodies for the April meeting?

Do you remember September 1998? The nominating committee presented its slate for the year 1999. The spot on the slate for President was vacant. We had a President

that year only because Don Bush, KE4DDR, volunteered from the floor at the last minute. I could go on and on.

What it boils down to is this. The Club is only as healthy as the interaction of its parts. The parts are **YOU**, each and every one of you. If what each of you is going to do is to sit like an amoeba and soak up whatever we who are in charge this year serve up, the Club doesn't deserve to continue to exist.

Let's look at it from a different point of view. For several years, the Club has received a rating as a Special Service Club from ARRL. That special recognition has to be **earned**. Club members - and that is **you** - have to step forward to do what needs to be done. If you are not willing to offer to help when help is needed, at every opportunity, the Club should not get that recognition because it does not deserve it.

I accepted the nomination for President last fall because I was "the new kid on the block." I figured that all of the old timers in the Club had served their time, and that my time had come. My telephone should be "ringing off the wall" with offers to help. What do I hear? **Dead silence!!!**

We'll see you all at the April meeting. It will be at the usual time and place. The timetable for the remodeling of the NRAO building has been moved back somewhat. Hein, N4FWA, is keeping on top of the situation and will let us know of developments as soon as he learns of them.

73, Stan

Veep Peeps

Vic, N3DFS

Bio Bits - Greg Faust N4PGS

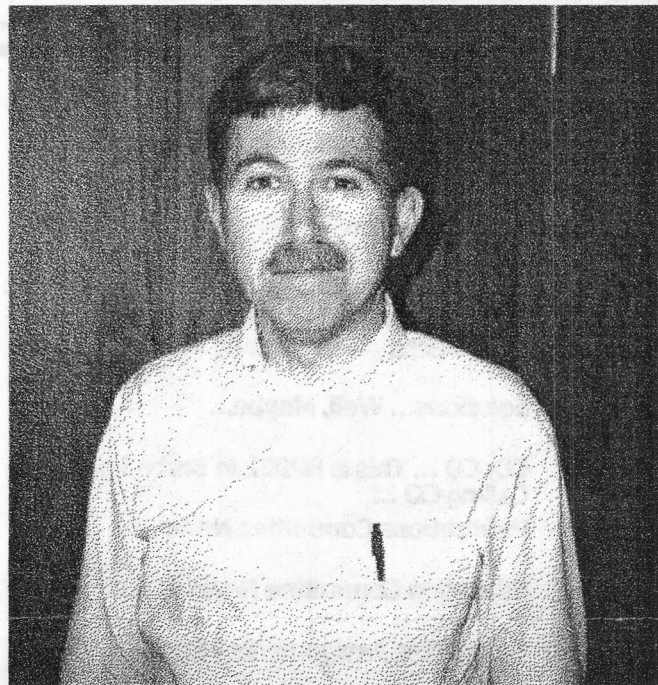
Greg was born in Springfield, Mass, on June 3, 1950 (a boomer!). He was raised in rural Iowa, attended Iowa State University and studied Electrical Engineering and earned his BE degree. Greg was married in 1972 to Linda and has two daughters (twins, born in 1981). Both daughters are currently in college.

At the age of about five, he realized he was an engineer. (Engineers are born, not made...). He worked part time for the Army Corps of Engineers and then started a career as a design engineer in 1972 designing and working with early programmable logic controllers. He began work in Iowa for Eagle Signal, then Struthers-Dunn, both times as a design engineer. He then moved to Virginia in 1983 with General Electric. He has been with them ever since, first as an engineer, and then later as a manager.

He built his first radio -- a little crystal set -- at about nine years old. Then, as a teenager, he started building CBs and then got interested in computers. He got one of the first

Radio Shack computers and it's been downhill ever since. Although hardware is his first love, software is fun too (as long as you wash your hands afterwards...).

He didn't actually get a **REAL** radio license (had a CB) until 1987 when Jon Katz, KO4OP and a couple of engineers at GE got him interested in Amateur Radio. He began as a Technician and then upgraded to Advanced, and has always held the call sign N4PGS.



Greg is now working a lot with packet radio, helping with the node on Buck's Elbow, APRS digipeater and various repeater projects. Currently, he's the Chairman of the Activities Committee and work to organize these Public Service events. He is a past president, vice-president, director and recording secretary of the Albemarle Amateur Radio Club. He is also a member of ARRL and currently the Emergency Coordinator for ARES/RACES in Albemarle County. In his spare time he runs with the Greene County Rescue Squad as an EMT.

If something needs to be done, pass it to a busy person. . . and Greg will get it done!

73, Vic

Solutions... Well, Maybe...

Harry, W2HD

Last month this column was entitled, "No HF Antennas Here...". Some comments were made about possible solutions to the problem. Now, let's get specific and, as the saying goes, let's get down to brass tacks. That means some practical proposals.

Nothing presented here is really new, but it's basically taken from material written by others who also recognize the problem. Other than antenna brochures and catalogs, here are some excellent references. One is the "Practical Antenna Handbook" written by Joe Carr, a ham from Northern Virginia who recently joined Silent Keys. Chapter after chapter deals with practical antennas for many situations, but the highlight chapter for this discussion is entitled, "Hidden and Limited-Space Antennas." Another book was mentioned in last month's "Beacon." It's the ARRL's publication, "STEALTH AMATEUR RADIO - Operate from Anywhere."

Getting down to the really practical, we must consider where you live and what special restrictions must be factored into your plans. First of all, let's look at the inside of the structure that might keep you out of the yard and trees. Do you have an attic? My first antennas were attic antennas... no poles or trees to climb, no branches to clear and, most importantly, invisible to outside eyes! If an attic can handle 32 or more feet of antenna wire, you can easily install a 20-meter dipole. Even if you can't cover 32 feet, you can always bend down the ends of the dipole to fit the available space. Most of the transmitted signal from a dipole is sent from the center section and only a small part is transmitted by the last 10 or 15% of length. Remember, it's the current in the wire that does the job and that current falls to zero at the end of the wire.

CAUTION, however and that is simply that you must keep the wire clear of objects so that fire can be avoided. While current is zero at the ends, voltage is high and that could be trouble! Your dipole needn't be a particular length unless you are going to use coax feed. The antenna can be multi-band with the use of ladder-line and an antenna coupler. How do you handle the feed-line? It can run between floors through closets in its simplest form.

Now, you don't have to have a dipole up in the attic. You can put up ground planes or "basketball hoops" (The loop antennas available commercially.) A ground plane can be hung from the rafters and radials installed at the base. You can't arrange for the radials because they can't be run straight? No problem, run them crooked then. After all, your car isn't a perfect ground plane, but it works. And that's the question you must ask... do these antennas work? Well, a truthful answer is simply, "Not as good as those outside installations!" Soooooo, should that stop you from putting wires in the attic? Not at all! The problem was to get on the air and I can assure you that will be the case. You never really expected to be "King of the Hill" with a compromise system so don't be bothered when you have to stand in line for a contact with that rare DX station.

Next time we'll chat about the big, outside world and its challenges. Remember the flagpole antenna or a carefully painted vertical that blends in with your trees. They are among the antennas that can perform well for you. My son, W2GG, has a yard full of wire, but you'll never see any of his

antennas and he has 9-band DXCC! If you have an opportunity chat with Rob, W3DX, a fellow AARCer who has written several articles on portable antennas. The late K4QKH was heavily involved in short, efficient antennas. You can't talk to Bow anymore, but his design info is undoubtedly available.

The story behind the story is that you can ALWAYS get on the HF bands with some type of antenna that can provide enjoyment. More to follow...

That's All Folks...

73... /s/ Harry, W2HD

CQ, CQ ... This is 8P9BL in Barbados ... Calling CQ ...

Bill Arnold, 8P9BL (aka KD4TOR)

Last month in the AARC Beacon, there was a short article about a "stealth antenna" that I hoped to use to operate from Barbados. In short, it worked . . . not a great signal, but if you're interested, here's the story.

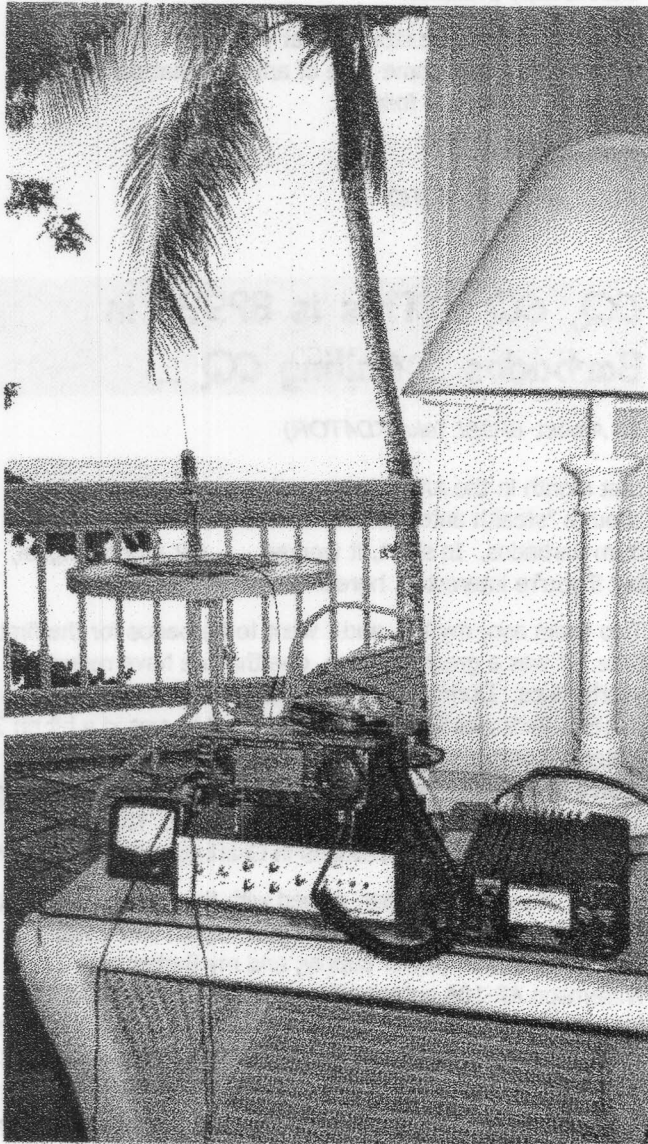
Two years ago, my XYL and I went to Barbados for the first time. It was a great vacation, one that we have repeated yearly since. During that visit, I jumped the hoops needed to get a Barbados license – 8P9BL – and operated a bit on 2 meters. I was also able to hear W2HD and W2EIU on the Sperry Retiree's Net with a small Panasonic receiver attached to a long wire that I tossed into a palm tree. That was my stimulus – could I work stations in Charlottesville as 8P9BL?

In early March of this year, armed with that dream, I packed my ICOM 706 Mk II, an antenna coupler, an MFJ 259B antenna analyzer, power supply, and my Barker and Williamson AP-10A antenna (see the B&W web site at <http://www.bwantennas.com/ap10a.htm> for details) and we took off for Barbados. I fully expected that airport security people and customs agents would have a field day, but during the entire trip, no one had the slightest desire to see any of my prized possessions.

Even though our visit was a vacation, not a DXpedition, I hoped to operate for about 30 minutes or so each day. On Sunday, 4 March, I set up my rig, attached the trusty little antenna and its trailing counterpoise to a table on our 2nd floor balcony, tuned it to an SWR of 1.2 on 20 meters without using the antenna coupler, and was able to hear YV5LIX working the ARRL DX contest from Caracas, Venezuela. To my amazement, I worked him on my first attempt. Yes, I thought, the Sperry Net will be a piece of cake.

With that in mind, on Monday I set up my rig, tuned the antenna to an SWR of better than 1.2 on 14.291 MHz and listened for the Sperry Net at 1210 Barbados time. They

were there, but the QSB and QRN were horrible. I could barely hear W4EI just above the noise telling those on the net to listen for me, but as hard as I tried, no one heard me. Later in the day I had a nice QSO with a person in Trinidad,



and hoped that I would not be disappointed on Tuesday.

But again, although I could occasionally hear some on the net, there was no joy in Barbados. Although at best I operated less than an hour a day over the next few days, I made contacts in Florida, Ontario, the Caribbean, and Spain, but couldn't work anyone on the elusive Sperry Net.

Friday, March 9 was our last day in Barbados. I vowed that things would work that day. Once again, at the appointed hour I dutifully listened on 14.291. For the first time, W2HD occasionally had a solid 59 signal, although the QSB remained a big problem and I heard no one else. . . . Then it happened – I heard Harry saying, "8P9BL, I hear you in the noise but can copy you." Yes! I had made it to Charlottesville, but only barely. Yet we had enough of a

contact to set up a schedule for 2145Z, which was about sunset in Barbados.

During our week's stay, I met Ralph, 8P6FK, and visited his shack, a 5 minute walk from our hotel. (His Web site, <http://users.sunbeach.net/users/rifill/>, now has a link to the AARC site!). The afternoon of the 9th, I asked Ralph to serve as a backup for my attempts to make contact with home. If all else failed, I would use a 2-meter link from my hotel room to Ralph's shack and I would work Charlottesville via his rig.

But we didn't need the link. Although my signal was not great, I was able to work W2HD, W4EI and W2EIU along with 8P6FK. Finally, I achieved my goal, using only the equipment that I packed into a carry-on bag. Although my rig wasn't world-class by any stretch, it worked. Yes . . . it worked.

Now, what should I do to prepare for next year's visit? Obviously, I need a better antenna. Would the hotel permit a dipole? Probably not.

Could I find a better antenna that is still small enough and light enough to fit into my suitcase? Perhaps.

What will I do? Time will tell.

73, Bill

← **Operating position of 8P9BL.** Note antenna, ocean, and palm tree. Wish I were still there!

Publications Committee News

Joseph D. Fritz, KD4RWX

Have you checked in to see what is new on the AARC web site? It is located at (bookmark this page for quick access!) <http://www.people.virginia.edu/~ejd4e/aarc/index.htm>. Ed, KF4UTD has done a very good job for the members of the club. Contact him if you would like to see additional information on the web site.

Bob, K4UVT continues to do a great job with The Beacon. Wouldn't it be nice if some of you would prepare articles that would interest other members **AND** send them to Bob for publication? Now that you are going to send him one, use **k4uvt@yahoo.com** as the e-mail address.

DIRECTORY: I will try to get the new Directory out by midyear. Please notify me of any changes to your information. Include e-mail addresses. They have become very helpful for communications. Some things are better passed along as e-mails, than as on the air messages. It saves typing, too. *Till next time...*

Education Committee News

Joseph D. Fritz, KD4RWX

First the good news. As of the March meeting, Tom Rae, W4RAE has become the Chair of this committee. I volunteered to, once again, chair the Publications Committee and knew it was not proper to chair two committees. So, I asked Tom if he would serve as chair of the Education Committee. He agreed and he was appointed by the President at the March meeting. I will continue to serve on this committee.

The bad news is that after writing two articles about this committee and asking for people to volunteer for some activities, NOT ONE SINGLE PERSON has stepped forward. Education is one of the basic functions this club was organized to do. It has, in the '90s, performed very well, especially by conducting classes for individuals who wish to become Amateur Radio operators. Many of you were helped when you went through a class and can teach. Others of you are also fully capable of teaching a class, or perhaps do some other educational activity that might be set up.

Please let Tom, W4RAE know of your interest. Plans **NEED** to be made soon for us to get a class started this fall. He can be contacted at traee@esinet.net.

Committee Assignments - Errata

Joe, KD4RWX

Due to technical problems, the list of committee assignments in the March issue of the newsletter was printed incorrectly. The corrected assignments are listed below.

Technical Committee:

Chair: Elmer, KF4UCI
 Director: Greg, N4PGS
 Members: Joe, W2PVY and Mike, N4HRO

Fund Raising Committee:

Chair: (Vacant)
 Treasurer: Ralph, K4CFE;
 Member: Ron, K4RKA

Education Committee:

Chair: Joe Fritz, KD4RWX;
 Director: Joe Fritz, KD4RWX;
 Members: Harry Dannals, W2HD
 Nancy Holliday, KF4MEF
 Tom Rae, W4RAE

Publication Committee:

Chair: (Vacant)
 Director: Mike, N4HRO
 Members: Steve, KD4HBX
 Ed, KF4UTD (Webmeister)
 Bob, K4UVT Newsletter Editor

Activities Committee:

Chair: Greg, N4PGS
 Director: Elmer, KF4UCI
 Members: Marty, AG4DN
 Jerry, WD4CEN
 Steve, KF4ZGD

Membership Committee:

Chair: (Vacant)
 Director: Mike, N4HRO
 Members: Howard, KG4FYF
 Steve, KF4ZGD

Bylaw Review Committee:

Stan, K2SSB
 Joe, KD4RWX
 Harry, W2HD
 Greg, N4PGS
 Rick, KO4WQ
 Ron, K4RKA

AARC Public Service Activities

Greg, N4PGS

Many thanks to all the amateurs who showed up and participated in the activities over the March 24-25 weekend. While the quality of the volunteers was excellent, the quantity of volunteers was POOR!

For Saturday at the Boat Races, five volunteers worked the event. On Sunday, for the Bike Races at the Kluge Loop, we had eight volunteers - this event normally needs at least thirteen.

The folks who worked the events did a great job.

Saturday - Lake Monticello Boat Races

Donna KG4FOL
 Rick KO4WQ
 Joe KA0JG
 Ernie W2EIU
 Dave K4DND
 Chuck WB6QKB

Sunday - Jefferson Cup Bike Races

Jessie KE4OID
 Rick KO4WQ
 Al KD4NRE
 Dave K4DND
 Hein N4FWA
 Will KJ4XZ
 Nick KF4UTB

Fortunately, our clients felt that we did a good job, in spite of the low number of volunteers. But we could have used more help, if just to be able to occasionally relieve our own people. For the Bike Race we were actually short so many volunteers it affected the operation of the races. Not too badly, as I said earlier, but it sure kept those Hams who did show up very busy juggling several things at once.

We have some more Public Service events coming up soon. One is the MS Walk on April 22nd. The next (and biggest) is the MS150 on June 9th and 10th. (The Dave Matthews Band concert, while certainly a public event, is not on the Club list. This is more of a RACES event. RACES members will be contacted with more information.)

If, by April 10, we don't have at least eight volunteers for the MS Walk signed up, I'll call the MS folks and tell them we won't be helping this year. If, by April 25 we don't have at least 15 volunteers signed up for the MS150, I'll contact MS and tell them that the AARC is not interested in helping this year and we'll look for volunteers from other areas.

Let's make this a point of discussion at the next Club meeting. Do you want to continue as a 'Public Service' Club? Think about it.

73, Greg

How Much Power Does Your Wall Wart Draw?

Ron, K4RKA

On the NPEN technical session on 2/15/01, the question was asked, "Is it OK to leave my portable's wall wart charger plugged in when it is not charging the HT?" We discussed a

couple of reasons why you might not want to do so, such as the threat of lightning damaging it or the output being accidentally shorted and frying the charger. I begin to wonder just how much power a charger does draw when it is not charging. My WAG was "about the same as an electric clock", but I decided that a more definite answer was appropriate. In my collection of old, large junk, I had a rack mount low wattage meter, so I dragged it out, put some power leads on it and proceeded to measure some things.

Starting at the bottom, my inductive coupled electric toothbrush charger pulls 0.4 watts without the toothbrush plugged in and 0.6 watts with the toothbrush charging. The cost at my residential rate makes this .11 cents per day or about 3.5 cents per month since it spends most of its life plugged in.

By comparison by wall wart HT charger draws 0.8 watts plugged in and 1.5 watts charging an already charged battery. The "drop in" charger for the same HT draws 1.3 watts in "standby" and 2.1 watts charging the same HT.

So my cost for leaving the wall wart plugged in all the time is 4.6 cents per month in "standby" or 8.5 cents with the HT on constant charge.

An electric "old fashion" clock draws 2.6 watts or 14.8 cents a month. An LED digital clock required 2.9 watts for 16.5 cents a month. So the HT wall wart uses about one fourth to one half the electricity that an electric clock depending on whether it is charging the HT or not. I guess we can conclude that the cost of operating the HT charger is pretty low.

For comparison, a not turned on uses 6 units tested). Turned tape required 14 to clock was NOT



VCR plugged in but to 10 watts (three on but not running a 17 watts. **Note:** the blinking for the

measurements so this may be unrealistic for some households!! So turning the VCR off when not in use saves 46 cents a month (off 34 cents, on 80 cents).

Therefore you can charge 6 to 9 HTs for the cost of one VCR or about 2 HTs per electric clock. I knew you would be interested!!! Doing this did prove one thing to me. One of my wall warts had a broken wire. No wonder the battery on that HT wouldn't stay charged. A true charging indicator certainly would be nice - - and that may be the subject of another article since many "chargers" which do have indicators only indicate that the charger has power, NOT that is charging the device.

Till next time ... Ron

So What is "Hellschreiber"?

Ed, KF4UTD

I found an interesting RTTY mode, available as free sound card software. It's called Hellschreiber, and is certainly a most distinctive name for a RTTY mode.

Hellschreiber was the one of the earliest technologies for sending information over radio, predated only by Morse Code. Yet, today modified Hellschreiber is considered one of the most effective modes for sending text in weak signal conditions, with Morse itself still the recognized leader. But why would a primitive technology like Hellschreiber beat out modern error correcting modes like PSK-31 & MFSK 16 / 8?

Well, I'm not going to tell you here, you have to check out the article at the web site (this is called a "teaser" in the trade). You'll also find a link the ARES site photos of the recent training session, and a set of links (on the links page) suggested by Ron (K4RKA) for vintage radio gear and parts.

So, come on over and check it out at the AARC web site at <http://www.people.virginia.edu/~ejd4e/aarc/>.

Club Business

AARC Board Minutes March 6, 2001

Attending -- President: Stan, K2SSB; Vice President: Vic, N3DFS; Acting Secretary: Joe, KD4RWX; Treasurer: Ralph, K4CFE; Mike, N4HRO; Elmer, KF4UCI; Dick, W4BZW; Acting Director: Steve, KF4ZGD.

Ralph reported a treasury balance of \$3132.72.

Elmer indicated that there had been some noise on repeater recently. Mentioned the need for funds for purchase of antenna and duplexer. (to be done at regular meeting).

Joe volunteered to serve as Chair of Publication Committee -- Appointed by President and approved by Board.

Mike suggested that members in arrears be contacted. A schedule was established.

Elmer reported for Greg, in his absence, that there was a need for help with a boating activity and that there had been a request for assistance at the Dave Matthews concert. This is to be an ARES only participation activity.

Dick volunteered to serve as chair of the Membership Committee. He was appointed.

Vic reported that Elmer would do equipment checks at the March meeting and there is no April meeting program, as of now. Suggested we form a Skywarn class- level 2 sometime soon.

Joe suggested that since the club has made no progress towards the previously approved participation in the Lewis and Clark Special event activity, that we inform the sponsoring club in Washington State that we are rescinding our participation. The Board approved that action. *[Joe did notify the sponsor.]*

Regular Meeting March 13, 2001

President Stan, K2SSB presided.

Program: Greg, N4PGS presented Ruth, KF4AGV. She gave a brief talk about how Hams serve an important function in the bike events, which she oversees.

A Special Election was conducted to elect the following positions: Secretary and Director. For Secretary, Joe Fritz, KD4RWX was nominated. Ron, K4RKA moved to close the nominations. Approved. Ron, K4RKA moved to elect. Approved. Joe, KD4RWX was elected Secretary. For Director, Steve, KF4ZGD was nominated. Rick, KO4WQ moved to close nominations. Approved. A motion to elect Steve was moved and seconded. Approved. Steve, KF4ZGD was elected to be a Director, which filled the vacancy caused when Bob-K4DU was unable to continue.

Elmer moved that we purchase an antenna and a triplexer for repeater site. Seconded. Motion was approved.

The February Minutes were approved.

The Treasurer, Ralph, K4CFE, reported a balance of \$3132.72. Report approved.

The President appointed Tom, W4RAE as the new Chair of the Education Committee. He replaced Joe, KD4RWX who had moved over to Chair the Publications Committee.

The new Directory should be published about mid-year.

Volunteers are needed for upcoming bike races and boat races. MS Walk scheduled for April 22nd. Dave Matthews Band concert scheduled for April 21st. Contact Greg, N4PGS for participation in any of these activities.

Noted that Packet BBS exists at ALBB on 145.03 MHz.

Hein, N4FWA reported that there are no room conflicts at NRAO at least until possibly October. He will provide updates.

Meeting Adjourned at 8:15 PM.

Submitted by Joseph D. Fritz, Acting Secretary

DX and Contests with a Modest Transceiver and Antenna

Bob, K4UVT

There have been several articles in the Beacon over the last several months by Harry, W2HD and Bill, KD4TOR on the subject of antenna systems that are quite a bit less than the

antenna farm with stacked yagis on 150 foot towers that we all dream of. So I figured it was time for me to put in my \$0.02 on the subject.

I have been a ham for 41 years now. From the very first year, I acquired an interest in DX and contesting. This interest has persisted to this day. Most of that activity has been done with 100 watts or less. Antenna systems varied from a mobile whip on the patio to a 7-element yagi on a 40-foot tower. In all that time, an amp was used for 2 or 3 years and then only when it was *really* needed to crack a large pileup on a DX station. Since 1991, my primary antenna has been a Butternut HF6VX vertical with perhaps a dozen radials – not buried, just lying on the ground. The Butternut 12 and 17 meter add-on kits were added to allow operation on the WARC bands. I moved to Charlottesville in June 1997, but could not really do any operating here until January 1998. The Butternut vertical has been fed by a Kenwood TS-940S/AT transceiver running barefoot at 100 watts. Since I have moved all over the country during the last 25 years, I try to see how long it will take me to work 100 countries from each new QTH.

My DXCC country count from C'ville is currently 297 countries worked, with about 255 of those confirmed. Three more & I will attain the magic 300-country mark! Do I work every station I hear? Not by a long shot! But I think I do OK with my current setup. There have been many occasions where I jump into a large DX pileup and proceed to work the station with relative ease. I then sit back and listen to the pileup (sometimes monstrously huge!!) to hear what I was up against. In many of these cases, I just scratch my head and say, "I should **NOT** have been able to do that!" But far be it from me to complain ... I'm just elated I was able to work the station! Some stations I cannot even hear, much less work. I must concede that this is where a good yagi antenna, backed up by a little bit of "afterburner" from an amp would be of great value.

I admit that 99% of my operating is on CW. Over the years, I have found that it is **MUCH** easier to contact a DX station on CW than on phone with my modest station. I've always enjoyed CW and have a lot of fun with it. The popular hype says that "CW is dead...". If you think that, then just listen to a DX pileup in the CW sub-bands, or during a CW DX contest weekend. You'll discover CW has not quite gone belly up yet! I have been on the "DX end" of the pileup many times and I can assure it takes some work (and developed skill) to pick out one signal from the 937 stations that are calling you!

Now let's turn to contesting with a modest station like mine. I generally work the major DX contests as well as other country contests (like the French REF contest) or some of the state QSO parties in the USA. Last year, I finally jumped in and did my first full-fledged ARRL Sweepstakes, both CW and SSB! But for this article, I'll focus on the DX contests. The major DX contests go for 48 hours over a weekend. I do

not operate the full 48 hours and I always get my six or seven hours of sleep each night. Typically, I'll operate maybe 32 to 34 hours of the contest at most. Here's a summary of my results for several recent DX contests.

Contest	QSOs	Score
ARRL DX CW - 2001	825	675,675
ARRL DX SSB - 2001	435	244,035
CQWW CW - 2000	679	712,380
CQWW SSB - 2000	294	177,287

My scores in these same contests since 1998 have been similar to the ones shown. I get a little better QSO count and score each year, operating the same number of hours each time. Obviously, I don't win the major trophy or plaque for my class operation. But 2 out of 3 times, I do generally receive a certificate saying that I won for the state of Virginia (or whichever state I was living in at the time) for the class in which I entered. Sometimes I even manage to win in my class for the entire USA!

So, what's the point of all this? The point is that you can have a lot of fun on the HF bands working stations all over the world and even make a respectable showing in the contests with just a modest rig and antenna system. Some of those QSO's will be armchair copy, while others will be in the "squeaker" category where your signal strength is a hundredth of a dB above ESP. Obviously, it helps to have the radio wave propagation in your favor. In 1994, I worked Peter I Island near Antarctica on both CW and SSB with 50 watts and a mobile whip sitting out on the patio when I was living in Montgomery, Alabama. This island is considered pretty rare DX. These 2 QSO's were most definitely in the "squeaker" class, but I made it into the log and have the QSL cards to prove it!

Sure, you most likely won't wind up on the top of the heap or carry off the winning trophy in the contest. But, so what? The important thing is you can have fun just in casual operating with just 100 watts and a modest antenna. If you haven't tried it recently, why not give it a try? And just do as much or as little as is fun for *you*.

73 and have fun on HF!!! ... Bob

AARC Classified Ads

All items must be related to amateur radio and must be surplus to the owners operation (i.e. no dealers or for profit). Price may be listed if desired. **Note:** Check also the WA4TFZ/AARC web page at <http://www.people.virginia.edu/~ejd4e/aarc/>. Please note that all small letters must be used for this address. New Ads may be placed directly to the Editor: 804 990-2659 or via E-mail to the Editor at k4uvt@yahoo.com Please let **K4RKA** know when items can be deleted from this file. Updated 4/01/01

3/24/01 WANTED: 12V DC Power Supply	John, WA4IUN, would like to purchase a 12 VDC, 10 Amp power supply. Call John at 804 296-9016.
3/8/01 FOR SALE: Time Wave DSP	Joe, W2PVY, has a Time Wave DSP 599 ZX with manual. Notch filter, audio AGC & circuits to clean up RTTY, etc. Connects in series with speaker. Original cost \$300. Call Joe at 804 589-1495.
3/22/01 FOR SALE: AEA TNC	Rick, KO4WQ, offers an AEA PK232MBX TNC, complete with original carton, manual, cables plus an MFJ microphone switch for use with the TNC. All in good working order. Reply to rberman@rlc.net or call 804 823-1128
3/1/01 FOR SALE: Icom 228H 2M Mobile	Bob, K4UVT, has an Icom 228H 2M Mobile rig with mobile mounting bracket and DTMF microphone. Also still have the manual! This rig still works FB - it just doesn't fit anywhere in the new automobile! Call 804 990-2659.

Area Hamfests

Chesapeake, VA April 21	Chesapeake Amateur Radio Service Web site at http://www.qsl.net/cars Contact: Richard Siff, WA4BUE 721 Wood Duck Lane, Chesapeake, VA 23323. Phone (757) 485-3762 Email: melody@norfolk.infi.net
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VE Session Schedule - 2001

March 18 Lynchburg	Charles L. Beard (540) 832-7651 1:30 PM (Walk-ins allowed) Central Virginia Comm. College Room 2504 - Amherst Bldg 3506 Wards Rd Lynchburg, VA 24502
(ARRL VEC) AB4M	
April 8 Winchester	Brian L. Mawhinney (540) 665-0761 bmawhinney@woodmark.com 1:30 PM (Walk-ins allowed) SVARC Clubhouse 2126 Grace St. Winchester, VA 22601
(ARRL VEC) Shenandoah Valley ARC	
April 14 Dayton	Gerald E. Nauman (540) 434-0859 9:00 AM (Walk-ins allowed) kn4fm@arri.net (Freq 145.130) Woodmen Of The World Bldg State Route 42 Dayton, VA 22821
(ARRL VEC) VARA & MARA	
April 14 Richmond	Pat Wilson (804) 932-9424 9:00 AM (No Walk-ins allowed) kn4fm@arri.net (Freq 145.130) J. Sargeant Reynolds Comm. College Bldg B, Room 201 Richmond, VA 23228
(ARRL VEC) Richmond ARC/RAVE	

Birthdays This Month

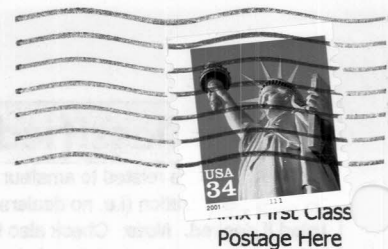
April 3	KX4P	John
April 5	WA4MHP	LeRoy
April 6	KD4RWX	Joe
April 7	KF4AGT	Al
April 10	W2PVY	Joe
April 15	AD4YM	Jim
April 15	W2HD	Harry
April 17	N4FWA	Hein

FCC Database Updates

New Calls	
None Reported	
Upgrades	
N8HUJ	Rick Johnson - to General Class

April 2001

Albemarle Amateur Radio Club
P.O. Box 6833
Charlottesville, VA 22906
<http://www.people.virginia.edu/~ejd4e/aarc/index.htm>



THE AARC BEACON
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ISSUE DEADLINE - 23rd of each month

Contact Information

Daniel R. (Bob) Dorsey, Jr. K4UVT
PO Box 977
Charlottesville, VA 22902-0977
(804) 990-2659
K4uvt@yahoo.com or k4uvt@earthlink.net

KA4JJD G 2001

CURRENT MEMBER: 2001

Michael F. Rein
109 Sturbridge Rd.
Charlottesville VA 22901

*** Next Club Meeting *** April 10 - 7:30 PM NRAO Bldg. UVA

CLUB MEETINGS and NETS

REGULAR Meeting: Second Tuesday of each month at 7:30 PM
BOARD & TECHNICAL Meetings: First Tuesday of each month at 7:30 PM
Meetings are held at the National Radio Astronomy Observatory (NRAO) building on Edgemont Road (UVA)
LUNCHEON: Wednesdays -- Area hams gather at the **Old Country Buffet** (OCB) next to TOYS R US on Rte 29 North from 11 AM - 1 PM
Monday Night Information Net -- Each Monday at 7:00 PM
YL Net: First Monday of each month at 8:30 PM
Northern Piedmont Emergency Net / Swap Net / Technical Session: Each Thursday at 8:00 PM
All Nets are held on the 146.760 repeater

AREA REPEATERS

WA4TFZ

INPUT/OUTPUT	Tone Access (If needed)
146.160/146.760	88.5 Hz
146.325/146.925	88.5 Hz (if enabled)
223.160/224.760	No Tone
449.250/444.250	151.4 Hz (If enabled)
145.030	MACHO Node
145.030	CHO Packet Bulletin Board

Other Area Repeaters

145.410 (-) 100 Hz Tone (if enabled) -- **AF4CY (Madison)**
442.075 (+) 151.4 Hz Tone -- **KF4UCI**

AARC CALENDAR OF EVENTS

DATE	EVENT
April 10	Regular Club Meeting
May 8	Regular Club Meeting
June 12	Regular Club Meeting
July 10	Regular Club Meeting

AARC - PUBLIC SERVICE SCHEDULE

DATE	EVENT
April 21	Dave Matthews Band Concert
April 22	MS Walk
June 9 - 10	MS 150
Early September	Simulated Emergency Training Exercise
Early November	Montpelier Horse Races

Please sign up at meetings when the SIGN UP CLIPBOARD is passed around. You can also send an email to Greg (N4PGS) indicating your interest in working particular events.