

THE AARC BEACON

A monthly publication of the Albemarle Amateur Radio Club

VOLUME 2012, No 3

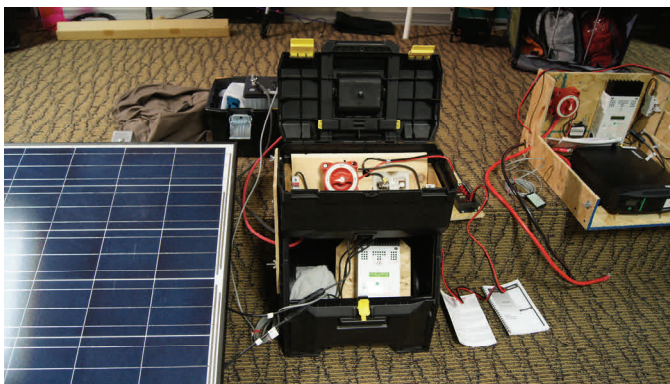
MARCH 2012

Remembered as 2011 Dayton Hamvention "Ham Club of the Year"

EMERGENCY SOLAR POWER PRESENTED BY LINDA AND ROLAND BEARD

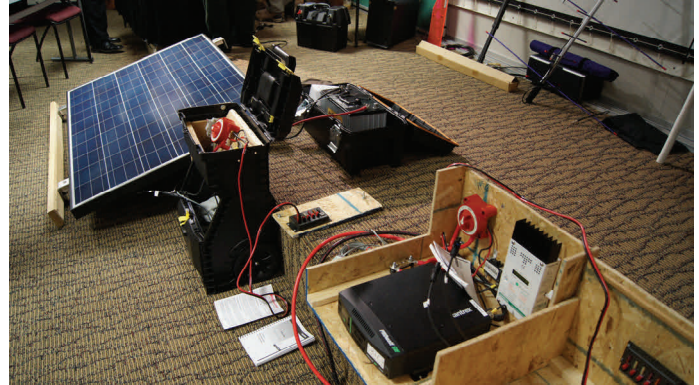


Linda and Roland Beard did a nice job presenting how they put together a portable solar power system that they use during lack of commercial power. Roland said that their design can work anywhere in the world where power is required to run cell phones, amateur radio's, emergency lighting, etc.



Taking a closer look at the quality components and workmanship that comprised the solar charge controller, boxes that enclose the system components, conventional battery storage system, and interconnection to the solar panels.

AARC Club members were very interested in the technical and construction details of the solar system components. Many members stayed after the normal end of the monthly meeting looking over the equipment, asking Linda and Roland questions, and taking lots of notes. It was obvious that this kind of creativity is what keeps us Hams interested.



VICE PRESIDENTS MEETING COMMENTS:

I would like to thank Linda and Roland Beard for their excellent presentation during the Feb 2012 meeting. Lots of good information, outstanding displays and well received as indicated by great questions from the membership. [For our March meeting, Dave Damon has arranged to have a presentation on public service events and the role that AARC can play in those events. Perfect timing as we approach spring and several public service events during the outdoor season.](#)

Thanks to all of you who approached me with club program topics for our meetings. I was very happy that you enthusiastically responded to my plea during the meeting. We really have some outstanding future topics tentatively including Field Day, station grounding, severe weather, and making proper cabling connections. If any other club members would like to propose a topic, please let me know.

73, Carter WD4AYS



AARC FEBRUARY 2012 GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Board Meeting

Call to order – President Jim (K4JEC) called the board meeting to order at 7:05 pm.

The following members were present: K4JEC, WD4AYS, N4UVA, K4PMC, K4DND, A4DH, KA4JJD, K4BAV and K4CGY.

Jim stated, “This being our first board meeting since the elections, I want to welcome two new faces to the board – Carter and Dayton. I also want to thank Dave for consenting to hang in there with us for at least one more year.

Secretary’s Report – Pat (K4PMC) asked for approval of the board meeting minutes from the January Board Meeting that appeared in the January Issue of *The Beacon*. She advised she had one new application to be voted on this evening at the General Membership Meeting.

Treasurer’s Report – Don (N4UVA) reviewed the club’s accounts showing income and expenses.

Beginning balance-\$4,833.19, no debits, credits-\$897.67. Balance as of 1/31/2012-\$5,730.86. We received \$350.00 from the IROC Endurance Run making the repeater fund now over \$200.

Vice President’s Report – Carter (WD4AYS) Happy to serve and I am actively looking for programs. Please let me know.

Technical Committee – Jim (K4CGY)—nothing to report.

Fund Raising Committee – Michael (KA4JJD) KD4UO discussed offering a free club membership as a raffle prize however admitted that might be to much like a fifty/fifty raffle.

Education Committee – Bill (AD6JV)—Bill was absent. K4JEC announced that we do have a tech class scheduled to start March 5.

Public Relations Committee – Jim (K4BAV) -- Jim announced that we should be pushing the upcoming cruise in. He then stated that he had been approached regarding adding photos to our club directory. After much discussion N4UVA made a motion that we continue as we had in the past. K4DND seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Public Service Committee – Dave (K4DND)—nothing for the board

Estate Committee – Dayton (AA4DH) –no report

President’s Report – Jim (K4JEC) - Calendar for 2012 is in final form and available for download and printing from the website. The FCC License Test Date is March 3, let’s work to erase the March 10 date that was originally set. In this year’s Cruise-In I would like to invite some of the community’s mobile communications stations to be exhibited along with the ham stations such as the County Police Depart-

ments Mobile Command center and maybe CARS mobile command center.

New Business – W2HD recommended that we have a club badge. There was a discussion and it was passed to the public relations committee to analyze and follow-up upon.

Old Business – none.

Adjourned at 7:22 p.m.

General Membership Meeting

Call to Order -- President Jim (K4JEC) called The Annual Meeting to order at 7:32 p.m. He welcomed everyone and all members were invited to state their name and call and introduce their guests if they have one. He recognized Jack Jones from the American Red Cross Disaster Services and David Collins, the ARRL Club Coordinator for the Virginia Section.

Secretary’s Report – Pat (K4PMC) asked that the minutes of the January meeting as published in *The Beacon* be approved. She advised that 110 members have renewed their membership for 2012 and asked that those who have not please do so we can publish an accurate “Member Directory for 2012.”

She advised that we have 136 members on the roster with 110 already renewed for 2012. She then offered Ben Lechitner’s (KC9UNE) application for vote. She said, Ben

AARC MEETING CONT:

stated, "I am a new member for this group. I received my license at Dayton Hamvention in 2005 while living in Indiana and moved to Charlottesville in 2006. I have not been very active while in this area but have gotten the bug under my skin to do more and am jumping in with both feet. My interests lie (at the moment) in ARES, RACES and SKYWARN as well as other community service opportunities as they may exist. Though I've had my license for a while, I'm still pretty raw and hope to get my general class to extend my skills and re-familiarize myself with the subject." He was approved unanimously.

Treasurer's Report – Don (N4UVA)

Beginning balance-\$4,833.19

- no expenses
- 897.67 credits

Ending balance -\$5,730.86 as of 1/31/2012

N4UVA noted that the repeater fund was now in the black.

Technical Committee – Jim (K4CGY) –Not much to report except we have 2 repeaters not functioning fully. Herd Mtn, our 925 and our 760 machine need some attention.

Fund Raising Committee – Michael (KA4JJD) We have two 2 meter rigs, one 35 amp and one F-SWR meter for the raffle tonight. Purchase your tickets during the break.

Education Committee – Bill (AD6JV) Bill was absent. K4JEC reported for Bill who was not present that there is a tech class scheduled starting on March 5 at Ch'ville Albemarle Rescue squad building.

Public Relations Committee – Jim (K4BAV) Reported we discussed adding photos to the Member Directory but the board decided to keep it as it has been produced in the past to keep expenses down so members can have multiply copies.

Public Service Committee – Dave (K4DND)

Dave announced that public service activities are very important. The March meeting will be about upcoming public service events. The various organizers of the events we currently serve will be here to advise how our club assists them. Dave announced that our emailing list now has between 160 and 180 e-mail addresses. Rick Oliver is now an additional owner and will be assisting with its maintenance.

Estate Committee – Dayton (AA4DH) - No report.

Vice President's Report – Carter (WD4AYS) announced that he is looking forward to serving the club. Lots of good things planned. He asked that club members need to contact him with ideas for programs.

President's Report – Jim (K4JEC) - **The club website** is our most valuable resource and

can answer almost any questions one might have about our club and its activities. Members of the board and our webmaster Kenneth invest a great deal of their personal time in attempting to keep the data there up to date and accurate. When you have a question or need some information, go to the website first and you will find what you are looking for 99 out of 100 times. That is not to say you are not welcome to contact me or any other officer or director at anytime. It is just a reminder that the website is there for immediate response when maybe one of us is not. There are a couple of items on the website that you should download and print for immediate reference such as the Calendar, the Leadership roster and contact information, as well as, the latest copy of our newsletter *The Beacon*. How many have read the February Issue already? A lot of work goes into producing *The Beacon* and the only way we can show our appreciation for the effort is to read it. **The club Calendar for 2012** is in final form and available for download and printing from the website. The FCC License Test Date is March 3, let's work to erase the March 10 date that was originally set. For this year's Cruise-In I would like to invite some of the community's mobile communications stations to be exhibited along with the ham stations such as the County Police Departments Mobile

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING; CONT.

Command center and maybe CARS mobile command center. What are your thoughts on that? This is the third year and it may become the make or break it year because if we have a decline in participation this year, we may have to rethink the whole idea. To give this idea a fair shot at success, we need to do a couple of things. The first, is to plan our own participation. If we can't find the time to participate, how can we expect others to drive great distances to participate. The second thing we need to do is to work the plan, polish the apple. I have heard many suggestions on how we can improve the Cruise-In. Now is the time to bring those forward and re-work the plan based on the best input we get. We will need to set up a strategic planning session for the specific purpose of evaluating all input for improvement of our event. Once a date

can be cleared, it will be announced in an email to all of you.

By the way, if you are not receiving member emails you can go to the website and put yourself on the list through item number 3 in the process of becoming a member. **Item 3)** Subscribe to the email list at <https://lists.virginia.edu/sympa/info/aarc> will take you to a menu that will allow you to subscribe. You don't have to complete items 1 and 2 if you are already a member -- just item 3.

Our web address is www.Albemarleradio.org

Frostfest - Bob Pattison, K4DU, had volunteered to take charge. We had outstanding participation and discovered we certainly needed two tables. I counted over 20 members of the club attended and want to acknowledge Dale Castle (KD4EAP) for his

outstanding efforts in staffing the club's table. I want to thank Pat for her invaluable assistance in staffing the Cruise-In table allowing me to take frequent bathroom breaks and roam the building from time – to – time. Bob Pattison agreed to do Frostfest 2013.

Old Business – Marty (W4MBW) asked that members contribute stories and ideas for the club newsletter.

New Business – a recommendation was made that we offer free first-year membership to Tech Class participant. It was decided to table his discussion for the next meeting.

The Program – Linda and Roland Beard presented a program on Solar Power for home and ham station.

Adjournment – The Meeting was adjourned at 9:05pm.

PRESIDENTS LETTER

What a month! With the change in the Annual Meeting to January, February is now the re-organization month for your new officers and the board and especially for the president. Such things as pulling together a Calendar of Activities for the year and getting all the appointed jobs filled and active take a great deal of time and effort. I can not believe it is time to put together another meeting for March.

They say, "Time flies when you are having fun." Well, if I were having any more fun, I couldn't stand it.

Looking ahead, the next big club activity will be the Skywarn Class on April 19 at the County Office Building South. If it has been several years since you have taken the Skywarn Class, this would be a great refresher opportunity.

Not too far along after the Skywarn Class we will have the Cruise-In on April 28. We need to have a strategic planning session for the Cruise-In to review what we are doing and what we can improve upon. This is the critical year for the Cruise-In and we will discover whether or not we have an event worthy of our effort in the future.

Membership is running at an all time high with well over a hun-

PRESIDENTS LETTER, CONT.

dred already renewed and ready for the full schedule of club activities for 2012. We can expect another great year for Public Service Activities and thankfully, our newest members are all expressing an interest in this area of amateur radio. For those interested in ARES/RACES work, I strongly suggest you consider obtaining and reading the *ARRL Emergency Communications Handbook*, First Edition, Sixth Printing with a Copyright date of 2010. I have two copies that I would be glad to share with any

member who would like to borrow one for reading. We are also coming to a time when ARES/RACES operators should consider becoming familiar with the Incident Command System by taking some of the free online courses offered by FEMA. More information is available on the Web at <http://training.fema.gov/emiweb/IS/ICSResource/index.htm>. Three of their courses at a minimum should be of particular interest to amateurs: ICS-100, ICS-200 & ICS-700. Take a look and try

the ICS-100 as an introduction.

This month's program should be of particular interest because we will hear from some of the agencies and organizations we serve – a first hand report of the significance of our service to these organizations. Dave Damon (K4DND) our Public Service Director will be the moderator.

What a privilege it is to serve the best Amateur Radio Club in the world and it is all because of you – the members!

MARCH 2012 DX NOTES; ALAN K9MBQ

To be an efficient DX'er, it is essential that you know what's going on before you call. It's always the case that "you can't work 'em if you can't hear 'em". Otherwise, calling just causes confusion and more QRM. So, when in doubt, DON'T CALL! So, if you want to work a DX station, start by removing doubt – Who is the DX Station?; What or who is he working? – your area, by call area, etc. Find out what's happening before you transmit. If you can't hear him, wait for the band to change – don't fight physics! Then, if the DX is operating Split, listen until you here a station working the DX on that freq or freq window (e.g. up 5-10), so you then know where to transmit when calling. This will save a great deal of time/effort. If it is a DXpedition that is going to be on for multi-

ple days/weeks and you have a modest station, suggest wait to call until the last few days so you are not fighting big pile-ups and hi-pwr stations. Good luck and have fun!

So here is some upcoming DX of possible interest.

Conway Reef, 3D2C: A multinational team will be there starting in late Sep until 4 Oct operating on 2-160M on all modes. See the web site for details: www.yt1ad.info/3d2/index.html

Botswana, A2: A25KW, A25DF and A25CF will be there 18-27 March. See QRZ.com for details.

Ogasawar Is, JD1/O: JD1YBT, JD1BLC, and JI1LET/JD1 will start operating on 29 Apr on 6-160M on RTTY, CW and SSB. See QRZ.com for details.

The Gambia, C5: ON4AVT will be there as C5AVT from 29 Feb-25 Mar working only PSK-31 on 15M. QSL to Home call.

There are many others so watch QST's DX column and the ARRL DX Bulletins.

Good luck and see you in the pileups.

73, Alan K9MBQ



YOUR HAM RADIO STATION – PART 2

Last month this subject was introduced by placing the five major points in priority order as seen by your writer. They were: The Operator (You), the receiver, transmitter, antenna and location in that order. The first and last category were discussed in the initial words and need not be repeated here. Suffice to say that in most cases you are unable to vary either one. Pat yourself on the back and good luck with the second item... you bought or selected the property and it isn't very easy to change that choice.

However, in the case of equipment there is a great variety of choice and most of these are covered by the budgetary restraints you find after meeting the usual regular expenses we all live with on a regular basis. The "extra" dollars available can provide wish list reality or an honest look at the facts and the choice of HF or VHF/UHF operation.. I've seen truly great operators take a simple receiver and copy signals that might be gibberish to a newly licensed person. On the other hand, some of the multi-mode, multi-dollar units with so many knobs, switches, connectors and accessory inputs/outputs require a Master's Degree in understanding and a good operator's manual for that same experienced person.

Simply expressed, take a little time and discuss with others what you have in mind for your Ham Radio on-the-air time. Always remember, you have to hear the station before you can "work" the station. Select receiving equipment which will meet the sensitivity, stability and selectivity needed in today's Amateur Radio bands. It would be great if you can afford something right off the shelf... new and shiny. However, if that isn't possible within your budget, check with club members and others to see if used gear is available or look into the many "For Sale" possibilities. However, it is strongly recommended that a potential purchase be checked out before dollars cross the table and this suggestion follows for anything purchased in this manner. If possible, arrange to have the equipment checked out by someone who has the resources and experience to do the job.

There are additional considerations falling into the category of receive and transmit. Some years back a station consisted of separate units serving the receive/transmit need. As progress was made in radioland, the combined hardware (called a Transceiver) was born and all manufacturers have followed that path with great success. This certainly doesn't mean you must go Transceiver instead of the two units if the latter arrangement is available at a very reasonable price. Obviously, most of today's stations are the combination sets because they have been available for decades.

If your budget permits go the transceiver route and enjoy the great convenience of a single package with combined features. Most of today's units are 100 watt output and many come with tuners built into the box or have this option. A future article will discuss the 100 watt power level versus higher or lower power output. Literally, many thousand Hams have had great success with the 100 watt level and see no reason to change. You can decide for yourself after you have experience and comments have been considered. A multi-band and multi-mode transceiver can provide you with a real treasure of fun and capability for a long time and is an excellent investment.

We will now briefly discuss the final item in your station list... the antenna. This subject requires many, many points which must be confronted and answered from very practical considerations. BUT... and there is my favorite word again... unless you live in a shielded location with lots of metal surrounding the rooms or cannot reach the outside world through a window or relatively small access opening, I can positively assure you that reasonably good results can be yours. This statement comes from years of personal experience with many different types of antenna systems located in attics and living areas. You may even be able to use both inside and outside antennas to meet your operating interests. Please stay tuned for next month's "ANTENNA" presentation for "Your Ham Radio Station." 73...Harry W2HD



AARC Club Repeaters

- 146.760 (-) 151.4 Hz Tone
- 146.925 (-) 151.4 Hz Tone
- 146.895 (-) 151.4 Hz Tone
- 224.760 (-) No Tone
- 444.000 (+) 151.4 Hz Tone
- 444.250 (+) 151.4 Hz Tone

AARC Club Nets

Monday-Night Information Net:

The Information net is held every Monday night at 7:00 PM local time on the 146.760 repeater. Your regular net control, W2HD, brings you news from the ARRL Bulletin and W2PVY provides the Amateur Radio newslines in real audio format.

Northern-Piedmont Emergency Net:

The Northern-Piedmont Emergency Net meets every Thursday evening at 8:00 PM on the 146.760 repeater. The NPEN is a directed net with rotating net-control intended to assist local amateurs with building emergency operating capabilities.

THE BEACON MISSION

The official newsletter of the Albemarle Amateur Radio Club, Inc. will strive to communicate with, enlighten, and entertain the members of the club in strict compliance with the official word of the club as set forth in the Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws as administered by the officers and directors who constitute the Board of Directors. The newsletter shall be published monthly on or before the 1st day of the month of issue. The deadline for submissions shall be the 25th of the month preceding the month of publication. The primary role of the publication shall be to promote upcoming activities, report past activities and accomplishments of the club and its members, carry the minutes of the preceding month's Board Meeting and General Membership Meeting, include an official club calendar of the month, as well as, become a recorded history of the club by the archival of all past issues as paper copies contained within a single notebook for each year of publication.

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AARC Elected Leadership 2013