



# The Beacon

A monthly newsletter of the Albemarle Amateur Radio Club serving Central Virginia

Remembered as the 2011 "Club-of-the-Year" at the Dayton Hamvention

September

2012

## Vanity Call Sign Fee increased to \$15

The Federal Communications Commission announced on August 3 via a final ruling in the *Federal Register* that the cost of an Amateur Radio vanity call sign will increase 80 cents, from to \$14.20 to \$15. The new fees will take effect 30 days after publication, making September 4, the first day the new fee is in effect. Earlier this year, the FCC released *Notice of Proposed Rulemaking and Order*, seeking to raise the fee for Amateur Radio vanity call signs.

The vanity call sign regulatory fee is payable not only when applying for a new vanity call sign, but also upon renewing a vanity call sign for a new 10 year term. The first vanity call sign licenses issued under the current Amateur Radio vanity call sign program that began in 1996 came up for renewal six years ago.

The club will meet on September 11 at 7:30 pm at the National Radio Astronomy Observatory, 520 Edgemont Road, Charlottesville. Dennis K4THE will be discussing NVIS at the September meeting. Near Vertical Incidence Skywave is a radio-wave propagation method that provides usable signals within the skip zone and has advantages for emergency communications. If you wish to study ahead, see [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Near\\_Vertical\\_Incidence\\_Skywave](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Near_Vertical_Incidence_Skywave)

life easier for honest people and more difficult for dishonest people, program your call sign into the start-up window (of your handheld radio). Also, in case the battery goes dead, I recommend writing your call sign, with a permanent sharpie pen, inside the battery compartment. Most importantly — the thrill of finding the owner of a lost rig is greater than owning a new found radio.”

Most of us realize how easy it is to lose a handheld radio. They can be laid down to be walked away from, or the belt clips can let them slip off and drop as we move about. They often come loose from your belt when riding in a car. It is just so easy to lose, one should prepare for the situation by providing a finder with some means of determining to whom it belongs.



In my case, I put a name and address sticker inside the battery compartment or some other location depending on the radio. I don't like to write on my ham gear with a permanent marker because I have purchased some used equipment before where the previous owner had marked his equipment in that manner and I couldn't get it to come

## Identify your equipment

I quote a statement offered in a story from ARRL by Jim Emmert, WBØURW, an ARRL member, “To make

off which was very disappointing. My stickers can be easily removed and occasionally, I have had to replace them due to wear which keeps them fresh and very readable.

This reminds me of a day when I parked my car at Barracks Road Shopping center. When I opened my door to get out, I spotted a cell phone lying on the ground right where I was about to put my foot. I picked it up and looked around to see if anyone looked like they might be searching for something. No such luck. This was a very old model phone and had no owner information or number programmed in to it. I searched the contact phone book and found a "Home" listing. I dialed the number and got an answering machine. I left the message that I had found a cell phone, where and at what time along with my telephone number. By the time I got back home, I had a message from the cell phone owner with a call back number. I returned the call and the man who answered was so pleased to hear I had his phone. We made arrangements to cross paths the next day and his phone was returned. Returning found property can become so complicated if one does not take steps to identify the property ahead of time – take heed!

## August Picnic & Silent Auction

The club's annual picnic and silent auction held at the Darden Towe Park Pavilion on Tuesday, August 14, at 6 pm. brought out a great crowd of members and guests numbering nearly fifty in head count.



Members filled the pavilion. (Photo by KA4JJD)

After action reports indicate that the food was exceptional and plentiful, the fellowship was extraordinary and some ham gear exchanged hands. Each member was asked to bring a dish to share to supplement the hot dogs and hamburgers the club provided and the variety was fabulous.



Mike K8RVR and Dave K4DND discussed the items they had for sale in the auction.



Ron K4RKA brought some of the estate items put in the auction.



Picnicking with friends. (Photo by KA4JJD)



Bill K4IB visited with Bill N0WP during the club picnic and auction. The club only has four Bills, four Bob's, five Johns and five James and that is a lot to keep track of among one's friend.



Bill N0WP served as the grill master. (Photo by KA4JJD)

## Public Service update

By Dave Damon K4DND

July 29 was the date of a new summer Public Service activity for the AARC, the Virginia State Cycling Championship Races. The races were held on a road course loop, starting from the entrance to Miller School, just south of Crozet. The course covered approximately 16 miles per loop, and was used by three race groups in the morning, and another 3 race groups in the afternoon.

Many thanks to the following AARC members who provided excellent service for this event: Linda KI5LLB, Don KE4DDR, Jon KJ4RPW, Mike KA4JJD, Bill N0WP, Greg N4PGS, Teri KT4UO, Bill AD6JV and Donna KG4FOL.

By the time you receive this issue of *The Beacon*, we will have participated in the next event, the Devil's Backbone Mountain Cross bike event for which a number of club members have volunteered. That means there are only 2 more events coming in September, only two more opportunities for you to get Public Service Event credits for 2012.

Sunday, September 16 we will be supporting the Boy's and Girl's Club Cycling Challenge starting and ending at the Old Trail Park in Crozet.

Saturday, September 29 is the scheduled date for the UROC (Ultra-Race of Champions) starting and ending at Wintergreen.

Thanks again to participants in the July Bike races and I hope to see more new faces at these last two



Don N4UVA served as the relief grill master. We cooked and served 40 hamburgers and 36 hotdogs in addition to an unbelievable variety of dishes provided by the members. Food was plentiful and no one should have left hungry. (Photo by KA4JJD)



Bob KE4AQD examines the auction items displayed for bids. (Photo by KA4JJD)



Jim K4CGY displayed the estate items placed in the auction. (Photo by KA4JJD)



Elmer KF4UCI braved knee surgery to attend the picnic. (Photo by KA4JJD)



Joe W2PVY and Vail were there. (Photo by KA4JJD)



Patsy K4PMC helped organize the food display and assisted Jim K4JEC in purchasing the club supplied items. (Photo by KA4JJD)

events on the 2012 Public Service schedule.

## The Beacon

The Beacon is the official newsletter of the Albemarle Amateur Radio Club, Inc. It 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. 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 meetings, as well as, become a recorded history of the club by the archival of all past issues.

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Albemarle Amateur Radio Club, Inc.  
Post Office Box 6833  
Charlottesville, VA 22906  
[www.albemarleradio.org](http://www.albemarleradio.org)

## Programming your new radio can be testy

Programming a new amateur radio could result in finger cramps even for an expert "texting" master. The other problem is that it is difficult to hold the radio and punch the buttons while holding and reading the text of the manual at the same time. We just don't have enough hands and some of our minds find it difficult to cope with the required multi-tasking, or should I say texting!

As always, define a consumer problem and industry will produce a solution for a price. In this case, the solution is a

programming cable to connect to your pc and software to talk to your radio. Eureka! Programming made easy.

Money is always the solution to consumer problems. The old saying, "You get what you pay for," is uncommonly true. For example, you can purchase a modern, computer-based, handheld radio for a pretty reasonable price. However, it is so loaded with features you will want all the accessories to maximize its performance and there you go. Have you noticed how pricey some of the accessories are with some amounting to a piece of wire with a fancy connector on each end coming in at \$40 or more? If you add some software and a programming cable to your purchase, a corded speaker/mic, an extra battery pack and so forth; your price can more than double the original cost of the radio itself.

The other problem is that the programming cable and software are, in many cases, only used once to set on the shelf for years to collect dust thereafter. The solution could be sharing. Yes, sharing is a time tested tradition with amateurs – sharing knowledge, tools and parts.

Maybe, as a club, we could establish a list of those who own programming cables and software for many different radios that they would be willing to share as the need develops with our fellow amateurs. Helping a fellow amateur in this way could save all of us some hobby cash for other more useful items to add

to the pursuit of our hobby. What do you think? Talk to me!

## President's Remarks

By Jim Crosby K4JEC

This has been the best five-year cycle the club has ever had for growth, image and identification improvements, along with tweaks of the club's Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws.

It all started with Dave K4DND Damon's leadership with a thrust that has carried us through preparation for our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary as a club.

It began with the application for our IRS defined non-profit status as a 501 (c) (3) public charity and will continue through the foreseeable future if we maintain our momentum with strong future membership participation.

The AARC is the sum total of its membership and what each member brings to the effort. It's that member participation that makes the AARC stand out by allowing our club to support so many different programs and activities.

Our club membership represents a broad cross section of experience, knowledge and amateur radio interests. We have members who have a primary interest in public service activities and we have members chasing DX. We have experimenters, innovators and equipment fabricators who bring a fresh approach with new ideas to share with others.

The fact that we all come together to share a fellowship, to teach and to learn that makes for the great relationship between us.

It is that balance of interests and the tolerance to accept each other that makes our club so strong. I pray that we never lose that quality that

was so powerfully displayed during our August picnic.

I am so grateful for that quality displayed by our membership because it makes club leadership so easy. Whatever the plan, you always show up to support it.

The Annual Awards Dinner for our 49<sup>th</sup> year is looming on the horizon and plans are underway to offer a great event for the club by a committee of dedicated members who are working toward making it special as a forerunner to our 50<sup>th</sup> Year Annual Awards Dinner in December of 2013.

Put the date of December 11 on your calendar right now to ensure your availability for this great club activity.

## Good Memories, Second Edition

By Roy Lane, W6RL

The August 2012 issue of *The Beacon* has an article Good Memories by Joe Fritz, KD4RWX that was extremely interesting to me because of my involvement in the past history of *The Beacon*, originally known as the *Albemarle County Amateur Radio Club Newsletter*. Joe commented that he does not recall how many years he held the position of the editor.

Likewise, I did not save copies of old issues of the Newsletter, maybe two copies of the early issues and copies of Directories of Members that served to jog my memory of "old days." I believe I joined the Albemarle County Amateur Radio Club in 1982.

Later, an election of officers for the Club resulted that Harrison Faulkner, W4DO, was elected president and down the hierarchy at the lowest level, I was elected corresponding secretary. I learned my duty was to send out announcements, such as notice of meetings, news, etc. I talked to Harrison about this and decided we would attempt to put out a monthly newsletter, thus was born *Albemarle County Amateur Radio Club Newsletter*. I believe this was in the fall of 1983.

At this time; Harrison and his XYL, Mary, compiled a list of radio amateurs in this area including Charlottesville and the surrounding Counties of Albemarle, Greene, Nelson, and Fluvanna. This was accomplished by going through the pages of the entire Call Book. The list revealed that only a small number of local radio amateurs were members of the Albemarle Amateur Radio Club. A special issue of the *Newsletter* was prepared with an invitation to solicit membership in the club and was mailed to the list compiled by Harrison.

I believe membership at least doubled soon after that. The original list served as the basis for an expanded directory first published in 1984 and then published annually.

I served as editor of the *Newsletter* until sometime in 1990 or 1991. I believe John Gray, W6UZ, and others followed until 1991 Joe, KD4RWX, took over the job as permanent editor. Several notable events happened in the

period of 80's when I was editor.

Bud Bezell, KB4JNI, suggested that the hams in the area get together for lunch at some time during a weekday to "shoot the breeze," and help solve the world's problems national and international. After some discussion we decided to meet on Wednesdays at 11:30 a.m. at Bojangles on North 29. We put a notice in the next issue of the *Newsletter* and it resulted in a small gathering in the corner of Bojangles. We enjoyed the chicken biscuits and made some progress in solving problems. We continued meeting at Bojangles at 11:30 on Wednesdays and the group grew larger and larger. Eventually, a larger portion of the group (those of larger appetites and/or a dislike of chicken) went to Bonanza on East Rio Road. Bonanza went out of business and the survivors and newcomers still meet on Wednesdays at 11 a.m. at the Wood Grill.

In early 1985 the club met in the basement of the courthouse and a film was shown introducing the joys of Amateur Packet Radio, the latest mode of digital communications. It immediately became popular and by the end of the year there were many hams in the area communicating by Packet Radio. Bud, KB4JNI, had the club WA4TFZ-1 digipeater on Carter's Mountain in operation by February 1986. Bob Kerby (W4BLD) later had a digipeater in operation (W4BLD-1) from Afton Mountain. In mid April 1986, Bud, KB4JNI, and I set up a Packet Radio Bulletin Board, WA4TFZ-2, in my QTH at Greenbrier Heights. Plans were made to move the Bulletin Board to the Dynabyte Building in downtown Charlottesville. Dynabyte was to furnish the computer and the sysop, Mike Watkins, WB4YVQ.

Mike was in the process of upgrading from novice to technician so that he could be eligible to be a sysop. Mike passed the VE exam April 19 and we were ready to put up an antenna on the Dynabyte Building but.....Mike got an offer he couldn't refuse; he moved to greener pastures out of the area.

I finally got the hang of sysoping and really enjoyed it. We upgraded software many times, improved the hardware, and learned computer operation. I installed a CD drive and set up a callbook of amateur operators on line. Finally in about eight years the WA4TFZ-2 Packet Bulletin Board moved from my QTH to the care of Greg Faust, N4PGS. This was before the days of internet and email.

Packet Bulletin Board was really email just for radio amateurs----except there was no LinkedIn, Facebook, or spam.

Packet Amateur Radio was driven into oblivion by the development of dial-up internet, broadband, Wi-Fi, and associated goodies.

*Roy Lane, W6RL (Formerly W4OTF) can be reached via [roylane@earthlink.net](mailto:roylane@earthlink.net)*

## Old program gets a new look and new lease on life

When you really need or want to monitor weather

conditions developing in your area, you can load this program and it will monitor for you in the background of your other computer operations.

WXWarn weather software by Scott Davis N3FPJ has been updated and made even more useful. WXWarn monitors the National Weather Service warnings, watches and forecasts and signals an alert when a new one is issued for the areas you specify in the setting.

It is free of charge and offers a real time chat window for observers who are signed on. You can set it up to monitor your own county and contiguous counties if you like.

For all the facts and information, go to the website at: [www.wxspots.com](http://www.wxspots.com)



**Jim K4JEC and Wes K4WLE discuss the grilling situation. Wes very graciously brought his grill to cook the hamburgers and hot dogs for the picnic. (Photo by KA4JJD)**

## AARC August 14, 2012 Meeting Minutes

### Board Meeting

No board meeting was held during the month of August.

### General Membership Meeting

**Call to Order** -- President Jim (K4JEC) called the General Membership Meeting to order at 6 p.m. at the Pavilion in Darden Towe Park for the August Picnic and Silent Auction. He asked for a motion to dispense with all business and proceed with the picnic. The motion was made, seconded and passed unanimously by voice vote.

**Adjournment** – The Picnic Meeting was adjourned at 8 pm.

## FCC reports to Congress

The FCC filed its report of findings to congress on August 20 in response to a Spring 2012 Congressional directive on the *Uses and Capabilities of Amateur Radio Service Communications in Emergencies and Disaster Relief*.

Boiling it down to an executive summary the highlights are:

- The FCC reviewed the importance of emergency Amateur Radio Service communications relating to disasters, severe weather and other threats to lives and property in the United States; and recommendations for enhancements in the voluntary deployment of Amateur Radio operators in disaster

and emergency communications and disaster relief efforts; and recommendations for improved integration of Amateur Radio operators in the planning and furtherance of initiatives of the federal government.

- The FCC report was not as favorable in the portion of the study that addressed impediments to enhanced Amateur Radio Service communications.

- The FCC recognized the flexibility of the Amateur Service in working with federal, state, local and tribal emergency service agencies to supplement existing communications.

- The ARRL stated, "The affirmation of the value that Amateur Radio brings to the communities across the country is underscored by the suggestion that DHS work with state, local, and tribal authorities so they may develop disaster area access or credentialing policies for trained amateur operators, including a means for documenting their qualifications.

- The FCC stated, "Our review of the record does not indicate that amateur operators are unable to find homes that are not subject to such (specific land-use) restrictions. Therefore, at this time, we do not see a compelling reason for the Commission to revisit its previous determinations that preemption should not be expanded to CC&Rs."

- The FCC recommends efforts be continued by DHS to facilitate the training and utilization of Amateur Radio across the emergency and disaster response spectrum -- from the public sector through to the various groups and organizations which provide support communications via the Amateur Service, including ARES, RACES, MARS or locally organized support groups. When served agencies and amateur groups plan and train cooperatively, it only enhances our abilities to serve our communities and the public."

- The FCC stated, "Commission rules that may be an impediment to enhanced Amateur Service emergency communications can, as the ARRL notes, be considered through the Commission's rule-making process. Consequently, we do not believe that Congressional action is necessary to address any of these issues."

The entire report is available via the ARRL website at: [www.arrl.org](http://www.arrl.org)

**More picnic pictures by Teri KT4UO)**



The crowd.



The auction.



Our three legged guest.



The grilling.



The eating.



The dogs and burgers.

## Classified Listings

The below listed items are being sold from the estate of WA4IUN for the widow by the AARC Estate Committee. These items will be available for purchase at the club picnic and silent auction:

COLLINS 75A1 (yes ONE)  
\$125

COLLINS 32V2 \$250

both items work but need cleaning, tuning, TLC.

contact WD4AYS or AA4DH

Heathkit DX-60 CW/AM transmitter and HG-10 VFO, good physical condition, a little low on output power.

Package price, \$100 cash, pick up in Charlottesville.

Contact K4CGY or AA4DH.

Heathkit SB303 w/manual and SP600 speaker, good physical condition, missing power cord. Package price \$200 cash. Pick up in Charlottesville. Contact K4CGY or AA4DH.

Drake 2b receiver Drake HF Receiver w/manual. works \$150

Drake Q-Multiplier 2-BQ incl w/2B

contact WD4AYS or AA4DH

Items offered for local sale

Contact Dayton AA4DH or Ron K4RKA

D104 Mike & stand clean/unkn 30@

Heath SWR bridge paint flaked off, noisy pot \$10

TR-44 Rotator Heavy duty

Rotator no work/ fair condition \$60

U-100 Rotator Light duty

Rotator U-100 no work/poor condition \$10

Voltmeter, Auto range Radio Shack 22-163 \$10

Voltmeter, Pocket Radio Shack 22-182 \$5

NOTE: Other Heath pieces and some older Collins equipment will be available soon. Check back. Also note the Swap Items listed on the club website.

## The Beacon Quiz Answer Sheet . . .

1. Who can name and number all the types of membership offered by the Albemarle Amateur Radio Club?

**Answer:** Full Member, Associate Member, Youth Member, Honorary Member and Life Member. A Total of five.

2. How many members constitute the Board of Directors?

**Answer:** Pres, V Pres, Sec, Trea, and six Directors for a total of ten.

3. How many articles constitute the AARC Bylaws.

**Answer:** The last one is Article X.

4. How many repeaters does the club own and maintain?

**Answer:** Five (5) currently.

5. What time and day is the Northern Piedmont Emergency Net called?

**Answer:** Every Thursday at 8 pm local time.

6. What time and day is the AARC Information Net called?

**Answer:** Every Monday at 7 pm local time.

7. Who were the last two amateurs voted into membership by the club?

**Answer:** Rob Robertson KJ4KMS and Robert Canody W8GTA.

8. What date, day and time will the next License Examination session be offered?

**Answer:** September 8, Saturday at 9 am local time.

9. On what date was the last Annual meeting of the AARC held?

**Answer:** January 10, 2012.

10. At what price do we sell raffle tickets at our meetings?

**Answer:** One ticket for a \$1 and 6 tickets for \$5.

### Your score!

**Nine to Ten correct:** You should run for president.

**Seven to Eight correct:** You should run for any office.

**Five to Six correct:** You should run for an appointed leadership position in the club.

**Three to Four correct:** You should run for a copy of the 2012 Handbook & Member Directory

**Zero to Two correct:** You should just run.