



The Beacon

A monthly newsletter of the Albemarle Amateur Radio Club serving Central Virginia
Celebrating our 51st Year
October _____ 2014

Our October Meetings is set for October 14 at 7 p.m. Mike McPherson KQ8P will tell us about Mesh Link. As a bonus, Bill Pond N0WP will discuss the club repeater system

Keep watch via email and the web site for any other upcoming events and help where you can.

The end of the year means we elect new officers and directors. Please get with the nominating committee (announced later) and volunteer to be an officer or director. We also need one more for the nominating committee. Do I hear a volunteer? Remember if you're on the committee you can't be a candidate. Next year's team will have a lot of work to do I'm sure, but with a team effort it makes it much easier to get things accomplished.

As far as Ham Radio operations, we are now starting the contest season. Now is the time to get your station and antenna's in good condition. There are several DX contest and many DXpeditions, as well as the 160 & 10 meter contest. I believe there are several VHF contest and of course the ongoing 100th ARRL Centennial contest, two of them. How are you doing on the Centennial contest? I didn't concentrate as hard as I should have in the beginning on the W1AW/x portion but I'm still #8 in Virginia and #292 or better contest wise. What I'm saying is that it not hard to work the W1AW stations and a great way to build up your WAS totals. You do need to be able to upload your log to Log Book of the World but that's not a big problem. If you need help to get LoTW working there are a number in the club who can help. The Challenge portion is working both the W1AW stations as well as any member of the ARRL. Working Harry W2HD alone gives you 275 points. It ranges from 1 point for a member to 300 points working the President Kay N3KN. I'm not doing as well on this one as the W1AW/x stations but still I'm #1207 or better out of 30,000 plus. Get on the air and work them, build up your contacts and experience. Any operating increases your efficiency that may be needed during a true emergency.

Choose what you want to do in Ham Radio and then go do it. I cannot stress enough that without operating you are not really a Ham, only a person that has a license to be one. We need the activity on the air to better support our reason to have the frequencies we have. If we don't use them I'm sure a commercial operation would like to take them over.

If you can get up an antenna for 75 meters, then join one of the many traffic nets or even the old codgers nets of which there are quite a few, but operate! Also don't forget there are East Cars, Mid Cars and West Cars nets on 40 meters that help out the mobile stations. There is the County Hunters Net on 20 meters 14.336 daily (most of the day) if you want to try

President's Corner

By Jim Owen - K4CGY



What a busy month for the club and your President. I'm not sure I remember what all the club activities were but I'll start out with the Picnic and at least one bike race that we covered. Then there were the ARES activities though they were mostly standby and monitor. The most important was the search for Hannah Graham and I know that at least a couple of club members were on the search teams. There are still items coming up of which we need to be aware. The first is on October 1, a clean up of the 146.76 repeater site. Meet at the Trump office and be transported up the mountain. Bring the usual items for a brush cleanup such as gloves, clippers, rakes, weed eaters etc. This is needed to be done at least twice a year, after the growing season and before.

We have a club meeting on the 14th of October and our vice president has prepared an interesting subject, I'm sure.

to work all 3077 of them. I still have three counties to work to get the USCA award from CQ magazine. As you get less of them they get harder to work! Do what you like and what interest you but get on the air and operate.

If anyone needs assistance with anything from setting up a station to operating please let your club know as there are many of us willing to assist in getting you on the air and helping you learn the many facets of Amateur Radio, the best hobby in the world!

73

Jim K4CGY



Harry and Kay play bingo at the rehab center.

Harry Dannals Report of 28 Sept

By Ron Richey – K4RKA

Hi guys,

Harry Dannals – W2HD, who is in the Charlottesville Health and Rehabilitation Center just called to pass along his cell phone number which is 434-249-2186.

He would welcome a call from anyone who wishes to talk and the best time is late morning after his rehab session or in the evenings, probably between 7pm and 9 or 10pm is best.

He expects to be there at least another month and may look into getting some kind of phone line interface with an SSB or FM rig. There are apparently such interface devices out there, so if anyone has any experience, please let us know.

Harry is in Room 103 at Charlottesville Health and Rehabilitation Center, 505 Rio Road West, Charlottesville, VA. . 22901 and he expects to be there for 4-6 weeks while he undergoes Physical and Occupational Therapy and his leg heals. He is in great spirits. His daughter Mary is in town. They are wrestling with what the next step will be.

73, Ron – K4RKA, temporary north end NCS for the Sperry net for the foreseeable future.

Coming up . . .

As you will see in the list below, the AARC will be treated to a wide variety of subjects between October and February of next year.

Because of our attempts to streamline our meetings, we now have the opportunity to feature more than one topic. You'll notice that this is the case for this month's meeting.

During the October meeting, Mike McPherson, KQ9P, will tell us about something known as Mesh Link. The bonus will be a report by Bill Pond, N0WP, who will discuss the AARC repeater system linking project and he just might have a bit more to tell us about our club repeaters.

November will feature Ron Richey, K4RKA, who will give us a talk about the history of our club. He will be joined by Bob VanFossen, K4DJG, who was there at the very start of our club.

December will offer no program because our Annual Awards Dinner is scheduled for that time.

Club Officers Needed

By Jim Crosby – K4JEC

Our president has asked me to serve as chair of the Nominating Committee. The committee will be contacting club members over the next few weeks to determine who might be a candidate for elected office.

I am certain the committee will be looking for candidates for the offices of president, vice president and secretary.

The committee has a commitment from Andrew Wiley to stand for nomination to the office of public service director for a full two-year term. Bill Pond has stated that he is willing to run for another term as technical director. Dayton Haugh could not be reached to determine if he was interested in running for another term as director.

Please consider serving the club as an elected officer by contacting a member of the nominating committee to express your own desire to run or maybe suggest a potential candidate.

A Rare DX

By Alan Swinger - K9MBQ

JH1AHT, Zorro, just completed a business trip to Eritrea, a very rare DXCC entity, and managed to make about 3000 QSOs while there as E30FB. Some of us got lucky and managed to work him despite the huge pile ups. It was an all time new one for me!

The good news is that Zorro will be going back to Eritrea w/i the next few months with a real DX-pedition team that will make it much easier for most Hams to work this very rare DXCC country.

I hope that AARC Hams will engage DX and give it a try.



Eager picnickers showed up with food and goodies to sell in the auction.

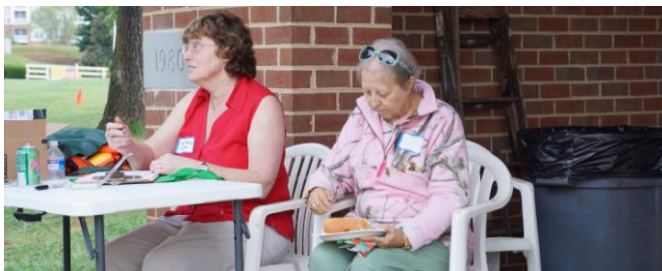


The club picnic/auction was a great success with plenty of food and goodies for the auction. Much equipment changed hands and club members all reported having a good time.

Technical Committee report

By Bill Pond – N0WP

On Wednesday, October 1, there were 7 AARC members who made a work trip to the 146.760 repeater site above Marshall Manor to perform site cleanup work. Many hands makes light work, and the fact that the Trump folks had obviously made a pass through the area with a Bush Hog within the previous 2 or 3 weeks also made a huge impact. We met in the parking lot at



9 a.m. and were finished and down the hill before 11 a.m.

A huge vote of thanks is due to the following volunteers who provided a great service to the club in helping keep the site cleaned up, and shows our site owners that we really do appreciate their hospitality, and want to remain good tenants. My personal thanks to everyone who volunteered to help, even if their work schedules didn't allow their participation on a weekday.



Left to Right in the picture are N3US, Ed Berkowitz; KF4AGT, Al Bogden; K4CGY, Jim Owen; K4DND, Dave Damon. AK4OL, Mark Whitis; K4OLW, and Jeff Heavlin. The picture was taken by N0WP, Bill Pond.



Public Service Committee Report

By Andrew Wiley, KK4SHO

The Boys and Girls Club Cycling challenge went very well out in Crozet! We had lots of help, thanks to everyone who came out and volunteered for the event, (we even had volunteers from over in Waynesboro!). Sarah Gran, Boys and Girls Club coordinator for the event was very impressed with how well everything went and even donated lots of soda to KK4SHO. KK4SHO will be turning it over to the club for the next social event that AARC has.

HEADS UP; We have gotten a request through the AARC website to provide radio communications for the following event. Fair warning, it is two weeks out, my question is who is available and can we do it?

The request stated, "I am requesting assistance for the Gran Fondo Virginia cycling event, taking place this year on Sunday, October 12. The start/finish location is Walnut Creek Park, and the courses traverse the southern and eastern parts of Albemarle County. The ride begins at 8:30 a.m. and riders will contest one of three routes of 22, 61 and 101 miles in length. The course will be closed at 4:30 p.m.

"This year we have the assistance of Commonwealth Timing and Event Management, who will be timing the riders via the Jaguar electronic chip system. They will have at least one additional transponder on course, which will provide some information on the location/progress of the riders. Therefore, the chief need that AARC can provide for us is radio communications to dispatch help for any emergencies in areas that may have limited cell phone coverage.

"The event does benefit a local environmental non-profit, Better World Betty. Any assistance AARC can provide would be greatly appreciated. We will provide all volunteers with lunch and a post-event meal."

Please let me know ASAP so that I can get back to him and let him know. This is the only information I have until I get back to him, unknown about any rest stops or SAG vehicles.

There are no more events planned for the near future (that I'm aware of) for the Public Service Committee. Again, a huge thank you to all who helped out at the events this year. I truly appreciate it!

AARC at the Second Annual Charlottesville Mini Maker Faire

By Mike McPherson – KQ9P

The AARC will have a table at the Charlottesville Mini Maker Faire on Saturday, 4 October 2014, from 10am until 4pm at Monticello High School. We were part of last year's inaugural Faire, and amateur radio's presence was much appreciated. We've been given an even better location this year!

For those of you who have never experienced a Maker Faire, please make a special effort to come out sometime during the day. The "Maker Movement," showcased at Maker Faires around the world, is all about sharing the innovation, creativity, and resourcefulness of people from all walks of life who are making things from scratch or repurposing commercial technologies for applications for which they were never intended. Sounds a little like amateur radio, eh? These events have been going on for nearly a decade. We are fortunate that a dedicated group of individuals have made the effort to stage a Faire right here in Charlottesville. For more detail, see their website: www.makerfaireville.com.

Please support local Makers and amateur radio by dropping by to check it out!

Summary of the 62nd W9DXCC DX Convention September 19-20, 2014, Chicago/Schaumburg, Illinois

By Larry Eicher - K4JZQ

The Daily DX Bulletin that I get advertised this convention. I had never been to such a convention but decided to go this year because it also offered something called a DX University course. Also making things easy, there is a direct American Airlines flight from Charlottesville to Chicago. Something to think about for next year!

The first W9DXCC meeting was held in 1953 and has grown in size and complexity. Since 1976 it has been produced by the Northern Illinois DX Association centered in the W9 call area with Chicago as its apex. Programs presented appeal to both "Big Guns" and "Little Pistols" all united in a common interest: a love of the art and sport of DX'ing. Generally many see this convention as the start of the fall/winter DX season.

Compared to those around me I felt like a "Small Derringer" but I learned a lot about DX expeditions and what those who make up the DX team go through to get to distant lands in order to put that location 'on the air'. One of the things I most appreciated was the fact that the Convention presented each participant of the DX University with a thumb drive that has all the presentations so we can refer back to lessons later on. There were topics such as "Software Tools for More Efficient Dx'ing", Propagation Considerations; Overall Station Engineering; Contesting to Increase DXCC count, and much more. While a few might consider some of the presentations a 'travelogue' I found the DVD videos of some of the most recent Dx expeditions such as Amsterdam Island and Wake Island, to be very educational. I left with my mind full of Cycle 24 updates, FT5ZM, skewed paths, the Maunder minimum, towers and much, much more. Next year there will be another convention in Chicago and the folks in W9 land hope more AARC members will be able to attend.

Of course there were also vendors present, including Icom, Yaesu, and Kenwood, along with numerous raffle and

door prizes. Unfortunately I did not win the grand prize of a Yaesu FT 3000 HF/50 Mhz Transceiver but did win a door prize from CQ magazine with a book on Propagation by George Jacobs, W3ASK.

Overall I was impressed by the quality and enthusiasm of all of the presenters, especially Craig Thompson K9CT and from the ARRL first Vice President, Rick Roderick K5UR who gave a challenge to all hams to become more active in ham radio and help give back to others in order to expand this wonderful hobby. This included: Attend a club meeting and give it support; help another ham; get someone new into the hobby; join ARRL, and write the word "Legacy" on an index card and put it in front of your transceiver so it can remind you each day that it's up to you to pass the legacy of enjoying the many facets of ham radio on to others.

I came back to Charlottesville and promptly placed my order for a new TenTec Omni VII . Even a 'Small Derringer' can be dangerous!

Batteries & Solar Power

By Roland Beard – KK4EDU

Just a quickie about some lessons I recently learned, in case anyone wants to get batteries. Second subject (solar) is more general.

1. Battery Stuff. I have been using a little PowerSonic PS-12/sealed rechargeable (12Ah) that has those little tabs on top. It is old but functioning. I also use a NP12-33R (33Ah) on occasion; it is showing its last legs. My wife sometimes uses a little med scooter that operates on 24 V by using 2 old 15 Ah batteries that are each the size of a big fat Bible.

The short story: I needed some batteries. So I looked around and found some changes have taken place and some other things have not changed at all. My searching shows quite a disparity in price per amp hour as well as weight per amp hour. The latter is important to us because we really want to stay mobile, which equates to not fighting with heavy batteries that are big. Here are a couple findings:

- a. The standard PowerSonic or equivalent batteries are still pretty expensive in my book. Batteries Plus has them over a hundred dollars for 12-15 Ah, depending on what you choose. Size is the same. Prices are a little better online but not that much. You can get bigger and bigger ones and the prices go up quite a bit more. Bottom line: they have not changed much.
- b. Scooters and similar equipment have driven improvements and dropped the prices for scooter-type batteries. The same batteries are used on quite a variety of equipment. The Ah have gone up so the standard is 22Ah (vice 15 or more recently 18). The price has dropped. And, the weight is the same. They are AGMs. And, the volume is unchanged, so that 2 will fit in a standard, rotating-top little cooler that is made for a

six-pack of whatever. The link for the Mighty Max variety on Amazon follows, in case anyone is interested: http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B00BSYQRU4/ref=oh_aui_detailpage_o00_s00?ie=UTF8&psc=1 In case you don't want to open the link, they are about \$90 for a pair (shipping included with Amazon Prime but also with some of the vendors). Wgt is 25 pounds for 2 and that yields a nice 44 Ah capacity. The cooler to put them in are at the last Target I was in for \$10.

2. Solar Stuff.
 - a. Yep, we can still power our emergency equipment (radios and lights and a freezer) with a small solar system. I use it regularly to run all astro equipment (couple monitors, telescope, video cam, and some lights) as well as a small mini-freezer (SAMs variety) about 2/3 of the time. I have power to spare most of the time with two 100 Ah solar batteries. There is only a one major thing I have changed: I went to smaller solar panels with a better controller (2x140 watt panels with a little Solar Boost controller). Now I am a bit more portable but have the same power production I did when I had larger panels.
 - b. I am not trying to sell my system, but this comment applies in general: small stand alone solar systems are getting easier to get, and the tax credits are still in force. Even for stand-alone emergency systems (not tied to the grid), the credits apply. You have to check about what the percentage comes off the federal taxes because I have forgotten, but it was over a quarter of the cost for me. 'Solar' is still a good way to go. More sizeable systems (tied to the grid but separable for selected circuits if the power is lost) that run more dollars are now showing payback periods (time to recoup the investment based on the amount of savings per year) of less than 15 years if it is done right. It is a good way to go if you can jump in with a little more money.
 - c. If you do not have a generator and have no way to recharge batteries, why not consider a small inexpensive solar charging system with a small deep cycle battery so you can charge stuff when you need to? Couple this with a small inverter that will hook to your standard deep cycle battery and you can last a few days while using communications equipment, a laptop, a few LED lights to see what you are doing, keep all the cell phones (including your neighbors') charged, and operate a few other things that you think are important?

Holler if there are questions.

Cable Storage & You

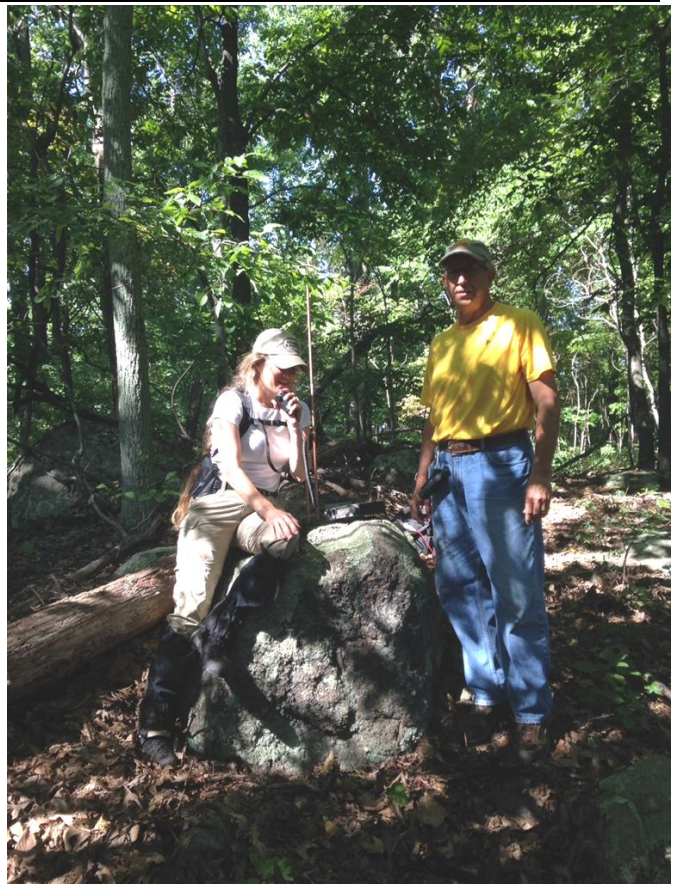
By Ron Richey – K4RKA

You have probably seen many schemes to keep the various cable types needed for today's electronic marvels sorted out.

Many devices share a type of cable connector but it seems like the other end is always something else. I suppose a truly organized person would have the right cable and the right manual in the right box stored on a shelf unit like Marty does where everything is labeled, used, and returned to its proper location. Then there are the rest of us who discard the box, lose the manual, and dump the cables in a box with 50 other cables. Well, ONE way to help with this is to save toilet paper tubes (have you noticed that they have lost about 1/4 of an inch in length just this year?), put them in a box, and store the cables therein.

Take a cable, hold both ends together, fold the cable the length of the toilet paper tube, and insert it into the tube with the important ends sticking up. Doesn't work well with coax, long, or heavy cables, but those are usually easier to find anyhow.

I found a Swiffer pad box works well. Once I get organized, my second box will specialize in phono plug cables leaving the first box for the mostly computer, MP3 player, & camera cables but we can't rush this organization stuff.



Soto activation of Sarah Vogely – KM4CWO and John Marsh – KJ4MKS was a first for our club and they reported it was a lot of fun.

Buy + Sale + Swap

NEW ITEMS & MOST RECENT LISTINGS as of 9/22/2014

FOR SALE: 75W 2m and PS posted 8/29/2014
 Yaesu FT-2900R with 2 year warranty. \$200.00
 Yaesu FP-1023A \$140.00
 ADMS-2900 \$30.00
 NIFTY-FT2900 \$15.00
 Will consider Best (serious) offers.
 Mike KJ4MFN richam60@hotmail.com

YAESU 2900R (info link)
 Purchased new in June 2014 - used indoors only. Great radio, but won't work in my Jeep.
 \$140
 Sarah Vogeley
 KM4SAR
 434-242-5238 (can text photos)

FOR Sale: posted 5/22/2014
 New never used OCFdipole.com model OCF1 off center fed dipole covers 80-6 meters, is similar to the Array Solutions

antenna, antenna is rated for 3 KW. New price is \$275 but will sell for \$150.

Tnx

Ed, N3US

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WANTED: posted 5/16/14

Stranded copper antenna wire 12-14G preferred; need app 135 feet for multiband doublet.

Carter, WD4AYS, celliot14@aol.com, 566 8767.

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FOR SALE - posted 3/31/2014

Hammarlund SP-600 receiver

- National NC 109 receiver

- Hickok 800A tube tester

- Knight R-100A receiver

- Old QST magazines- free

Carter, WD4AYS, celliot14@aol.com, 434 566-8767

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FOR SALE revised 5/3/2014

Sell: New 200 feet solid braided polyester rope, 3/16 diameter 800 pound strength, perfect for wire antennas. \$30.

Maco 10 meter Ground Plane antenna. Works quite well on ten meters and also on 17 and 15 meters with a tuner.

Assembles in five minutes. \$65.

Ed, N3US, Earlysville. new club member

email is eberkowitz@sbcglobal.net;

tel 434 975 9001

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FOR SALE - AARC benefit updated 5/16/2014

contact Jim Owen, K4CGY at k4cgy@yahoo.com

KLM 70CM satellite transceiver that works but needs some TLC \$20

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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The End