



The Beacon

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

Celebrating our 51st Year

March

2015

Our March meeting is set for March 10 at 7:30 p.m. at NRAO. For March we are fortunate to have Alan Swinger K9MBQ, Jim Owen K4CGY and Ed Berkowitz N3US in a forum format in which they will discuss the art of DX'ing in today's pileups.

President's Corner

By Ed Berkowitz – N3US



Despite the recent snowstorms and pipe-freezing weather, spring really is around the corner. So it is time to start thinking about spring cleaning and how it can contribute to both the growth of ham radio and our own AARC. Here is why and how: Our club's monthly raffles have in recent months raised about \$75 per meeting. If we increase the value of the raffle prize pool, we can probably raise additional funds to support our important club activities, such as repeater improvements and Field Day equipment.

So please consider cleaning up your basements, garages, storage units, attics, closets, etc. for ham radio and related items as donations to the club. A.J. Miller– KE4AJM, our Director of Fundraising, recently mentioned that he has very few items left to use as prizes in our monthly raffles. Moreover, donations of goods towards the club are tax-deductible. As we increase both our prize pool and meeting attendance, we should be able to beat past annual raffle proceeds of up to \$1200.

Also, please gather up your old (within the past 6 months) ham radio magazines, such as QST and CQ, for placement in your favorite car mechanic's, tire shop's, dentist's, doctor's, etc. waiting rooms. This will serve to promote Ham Radio. You should obtain the OK from the office staff, but they will likely be glad to let you do so. Staple or tape a sheet of paper inside the front cover that says: For further information on Amateur Radio, see <http://www.albemarle-radio.org/>. I posted a standard "contact the AARC" flyer (QST and CQ insert) with our club logo on the AARC website. Speaking of spring, the March 2015 QST issue is the annual antenna issue. Spring is a great time to start your antenna projects, and this new issue of QST has some great antenna ideas. Also, CQ Magazine also has antenna issues in the spring and they currently have magazine subscriptions on-sale at <http://store.cq-amateur-radio.com/product-category/cq-subscriptions-new-or-renewal-subscriptions/>

Spring also marks the rebirth of our public-service program. The events already scheduled are: March 29, Jefferson Cup Race; and April 18, Devil's Backbone. Public service events dramatically publicize amateur radio and the AARC. Participation, which provides experience and training for assistance in actual emergencies, also helps us maintain our status as an AARL Special Service Club. Needless to say, in doing this we support worthwhile community activities. Hams new to public service can learn about how the events work by signing up to be assigned to work an event along side an experienced club member. Anyone interested in participating should contact Dave Damon, K4DND, at k4dnd@arrl.net. Public service is a really enjoyable aspect of amateur radio. If you have not given it a look, this spring is your chance.

Another spring event: The AARC has scheduled a Build Party for March 21, 0800-1200, at the Old Reactor Building, at 675 Old Reservoir Road, Charlottesville, VA 22904 (<https://goo.gl/maps/sfWAE>). Several different projects will be attempted. Some perhaps optimistic participants will attempt SW/Ham regenerative receiver kits of various sorts, but all levels of skill and experience welcome. Please see <http://www.albemarle-radio.org/node/240> for details, or contact Mike KQ9P and mike@kq9p.us or Bill K4IB at wparnold3@gmail.com.

Our VP's Report

by Larry - K4JZQ

I and many members believe we need to liven up our meetings and to that end we need speakers that will help make our meetings fun and creative, as well as informative.

We are still actively looking for volunteer speakers to present topics on amateur radio at our upcoming monthly meetings. To that end a list of suggested topics has been developed and is located on the AARC website. We encourage all members to check out the AARC website for possible presentations. If interested, please contact me asap so we can have a well-rounded and informative number of topics for 2015 that, taken together, will hopefully appeal to the many varied interests found in ham radio today. We can only be successful in this effort if more people step up and become one of our speakers.

In February we had Mike McPherson KQ9P as our presenter who gave us an overview of low-cost (~\$50) single-board computers (SBCs) such as the Raspberry Pi, the BeagleBone Black, and the Arduino. Thank you Mike for an interesting and informative presentation on one more new aspect of ham radio as it is evolving in the 21st Century. For March 10 we are fortunate to have Alan Swinger K9MBQ, Jim Owen K4CGY and Ed Berkowitz N3US in a forum format in which they will discuss the art of DX'ing in today's pileups. Dennis Mennerich K4THE will speak to us on Propagation at the April 14 meeting, and on June 9 we have John Green KX4P speaking to us on the historic milestone in communications, the Collins KWM-1 and the era of the transceiver circa 1957.

Please Note: We still have openings for May 12, July 14, August 11, October 13, and November 10. Let me hear from you if you have a topic you'd like to share with your fellow Hams.

Check out the list on the AARC website, or add your own topic. Presentations generally run 30-45 minutes with 15 minutes or so for questions/answers.

Field Day: What is it really?

By Larry Eicher, K4JZQ

Motto for 2015 Field Day: Field Day is a contest, it is a social event, it is an opportunity for public relations; it is ALL those things. If we put our energy into the part that matters most to us and work together, we'll have the best AARC Field Day ever!

Or we may not have Field Day at all! That is the choice and what we as AARC members face in 2015. Many members have indicated an interest in Field Day activities but only if it focuses on what they think is important. Obviously there are many areas of interest in ham radio today and each one can and should be addressed during Field Day. But to do so means we need volunteers in each of those categories to make it work. Are you willing to step up to the job?

If you're interested in CW, Digital, Contesting, Publicity, GOTA station, Space, and/or just getting together to have a great social interaction with each other, Field Day is

for you. But if we don't get volunteers for a particular facet of Field Day, that activity will, by necessity, have to be eliminated. So it's your choice! Make your preferences known NOW so we can get you on the list for these various activities. We need to start our planning NOW because June is just around the corner.

Note for members who wish more Social Interaction: If you think we should do more camping, grilling, movies for the kids etc., that is something the Field Day committee will happily consider, but also please help us identify volunteers to do the actual work and be prepared to gather the equipment and do some of the work yourself in that category. This applies to all other categories of Field Day as well, whether it be in gathering and setting up equipment, tents, antennas for all categories of operation, as well as tearing down at the end of this year's Field Day event.

Remember, if we put our energy into the part that matters most to us and work together, we'll have the best AARC Field Day ever!

AARC Field Day Committee:

Larry Eicher, K4JZQ

Dr. Michael Rein, KA4JJD

Ed Berkowitz, N3US,

Bill Pond, N0WP

The Science Fair, AARC, and Ham Radio

By Bill Phillips, AD6JV

The next Virginia Piedmont Regional Science Fair is coming up March 17, 2015. Approximately 300 entries from middle and high school students from Albemarle and eleven other counties will be judged for merit, with the winners in each category receiving certificates, in addition to other prizes offered by Fair sponsors. Overall winners will be selected and will move on to the State Science and Engineering Fair.

AARC has been participating in the Science Fair annually, by awarding special prizes for projects related to radio, communications, or other topics pertaining to our interests as radio hams. The purpose behind these awards is to encourage kids to embrace electronics and communications technology and, hopefully, ham radio as well. Since we, as hams, have an interest in passing the pleasures of our hobby on to youngsters, this collection of science-minded students, having demonstrated the ability to stick to and complete a science project, represents an outstanding target audience.

Four AARC members will serve as the "awards committee" at the fair this year. Their only job is to look at the projects, talk to the contestants, and decide which ones are deserving of an AARC Special Award. We typically give an award in each of the Junior and Senior divisions comprising a check for \$100 and a book. The book for the last two years has been "Riding the Shortwaves: Exploring the Magic of Amateur Radio", by Don Keith N4KC. We have some more flexibility this year, and the recipe can be changed depending on what we find. We give the awards to recognize good projects and to educate the winners about ham radio.

I want to urge AARC to start on a new approach, beginning now, in which we try to reach middle- and high schoolers *before* they choose their science fair projects for next year. Middle-schoolers especially have no idea of the options they have in pursuing their scientific interests. They typically choose their Science Fair projects from web sites (Google “Science Fair Project Ideas”. You won’t find any crystal sets or regenerative receivers.) High schoolers are more sophisticated. They come up with some awesome projects, sometimes involving electronics as instrumentation, but projects involving radio are almost nonexistent. So the goal is to encourage an interest in electronics, with ham radio as a vehicle for developing expertise in communication science and engineering.

I’m going to make some first steps toward this initiative by talking to the Science Fair management, and to science teachers I’ve met at past fairs. I hope AARC members with connections to middle and high school education (e.g. kids in school) will pitch in with suggestions. Let’s make this work.

For more information on the Science Fair, go to <http://vprsf.org/>. The site is under construction, so bookmark it to revisit.



Jim Owen says, “This shows that you don’t need a top contest station to get the job done, or maybe there is no competition.”

AARC Minutes for the February 10, 2015 Meeting

Board Meeting

Called to order at 7:01 p.m. by Ed Berkowitz, president.

Officers & Directors present:

Ed Berkowitz – N3US, Larry Eicher – K4JZQ,
Patsy Crosby – K4PMC, Don Eason, Jr. – N4UVA,

Dave Damon – K4DND, Jim Owen – K4CGY, Bill Pond – N0WP, Jim Crosby – K4JEC, A.J. Miller – KE4AJM, and Jim Wilson – K4BAV.

Bill Pond requested approval of \$70 for a new tone board for a repeater.

Dave Damon moved that we approve up to \$300 for the tech committee to use for parts and needs of the repeaters. The motion was seconded by Don Eason and carried unanimously.

Bill Phillips brought up a discussion of the Piedmont Regional Science Fair and ask for approval of up to two awards of \$100 each and other handouts to be presented to the club’s award winners. Jim Crosby moved that the board approve the planned expenses for the Science Fair winners as outlined by Bill Phillips. Jim Wilson seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

Jim Crosby placed a motion on the floor to establish a “Study Committee” to explore the feasibility of acquiring a trailer to be used as an Emergency Operations Center and to store all the equipment that would normally be used for Field Day and similar onsite communications operations. The motion was seconded by Jim Wilson and approved with two dissenting. The president asked for a volunteer to chair the committee. Jim Crosby volunteered to chair the committee.

Board meeting adjourned at 7:23 p.m.

General Membership Meeting

The meeting was called to order by President Ed Berkowitz at 7:33 p.m. with 26 members present. He called for introductions of members present.

Secretary’s report: Requested approval of the February minutes as published in the newsletter. They were approved without amendment.

Treasurer’s Report: As of January 30, 2015.

Beginning balance-\$4,693.23, debits-\$335.55,
credits-\$932.70
Ending balance-\$5,289.43

Reports:

Ed stated that Larry Eicher is looking for programs, speakers and ask we contact him with ideas and suggestions. He stated Field Day Chair is looking for volunteers to work on the committee to help plan, setup and tear down.

Bill Pond reported that his report is on the website and that currently all repeaters are working.

Dave Damon reported that it's time to start signing up for public service activities. He said the Jefferson Cup Races will be on March 29 and the Belmonte will be on April 18. He passed around a clipboard for signups.

Bill Phillips reported the Science Fair will be held on March 17 and he needs one more volunteer to be a judge and asked anyone interested to contact him.

Jim Owen reported he had nothing to report for Estate Sales.

Pat Crosby circulated a copy of the club's Master Roster of Members and ask that everyone present check their listing and offer any corrections required. She also reminded everyone to be sure to sign the Sign-In Sheet.

Mile McPherson presented a program on micro computers and what could be done with them.

The meeting adjourned at 8:48 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Patsy S. Crosby, secretary.



Bob Pattison, K4DU, chaired the club's Frostfest participation this year.



Frostfest was a family affair for Ed, N3US, and his XYL, Pat.

Our Monthly Photo Album

By Jim Wilson, K4BAV



Bill Phillips, AD6JV, and Ed Berkowitz, N3US, discuss things at the 2015 Frostfest.



Another family affair at Frostfest in the persons of Bill, N0WP, and his XYL, Connie.



Our VP Larry, K4JZQ, fronts our club banner at Frostfest.



Don, N4UVA, and Larry, K4JZQ, discuss officer business during the February club meeting.



Teri, KT4UO, and AJ, KE4AJM, visit while staffing the club sales booth.



More officer business transacted between the Pres and VP in the command center at NRAO.



Dennis, K4THE, Ron, K4RKA, and Joe, W2PVY, visit during the February meeting.



Front row line-up for February meeting included: Stan, K2SSB, Don, N4UVA, Jim, K4CGY, Pat, K4PMC, and Jim, K4JEC with Larry, K4JZQ, peeking over from the next row.



Photo by Jim Wilson, K4BAV

Elected Leadership 2015

Ed Berkowitz – N3US	President	edberkowitz@sbcglobal.net
Larry Eicher – K4JZQ	Vice President	tuzlu@comcast.net
Patsy Crosby – K4PMC	Secretary	patsycrosby73@gmail.com
Don Eason, Jr. – N4UVA	Treasurer	deason@comcast.net
Dave Damon – K4DND	Director Public Services 2-YR	dnd@virginia.edu
Jim Owen – K4CGY	Dir Estate Services 2-YR	k4cgy@yahoo.com
Bill Pond – N0WP	Director Technical 2-YR	n0wp@arrl.net
Jim Crosby – K4JEC	Director Education 1-YR	k4jec@arrl.net
A.J. Miller– KE4AJM	Director Fundraising 1-YR	aj@ke4ajm.us
Jim Wilson – K4BAV Dir	Public Relations 1-YR	telegraphjim@gmail.com

Appointed Leadership 2015

Mark Gorlinsky – WA1A	Vol Exam Liaison	mgch@mac.com
Michael McPherson – KQ9P	ARES/RACES	mcperson@acm.org
Jim Owen – K4CGY	Club Stations Trustee	k4cgy@yahoo.com
Ron Richey – K4RKA	Swap Fest Coordinator	k4rka@juno.com
Jim Crosby – K4JEC	Beacon Editor	jecrosby@comcast.net
Michael Rein – KA4JJD	Awards Committee	mfr6t@cms.mail.virginia.edu
Larry Eicher – K4JZQ	Field Day Chairman	tuzlu@comcast.net



Bob, K4DU said, "Here I am with my Elmer, Bob Brown, K3JJJ, who got me interested in the hobby when I was eleven years old. We were neighbors then. I hadn't seen Bob since 1965. Ham radio is all about friendships that last over time. (Photo submitted by Bob)

Buy + Sale + Swap

For the latest list, be sure to check our listing on the club website:

www.albemarleradio.org

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. 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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Jim Crosby K4JEC – Editor

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The End